LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
MAY 8 1961
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BS445
.L53

OUR AGELESS BIBLE

By Thomas Linton Leishman

Why I Am a Christian Scientist

The Bible Handbook (with Arthur T. Lewis)

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OUR AGELESS BIBLE

From Early Manuscripts to Modern Versions

by

THOMAS LINTON LEISHMAN

THOMAS NELSON & SONS

Edinburgh NEW YORK *Toronto*

Copyright, 1939, by W. A. Wilde Company

Copyright, 1960, by Thomas Linton Leishman

Library of Congress Catalog No.: 60-7293

All Rights Reserved Under International and Pan-American Conventions.
Published in New York by Thomas Nelson & Sons and Simultaneously in Canada by Thomas Nelson & Sons (Canada) Ltd.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To My Wife

Preface

THE BIBLE, which through the centuries has outstripped all publishing records, besides providing a rule of life and action for millions of sincere readers of widely varying religious convictions, may justly be viewed as a book of universal interest and importance, not to be ignored by those who claim no connection with either Christian church or Jewish synagogue.

Loved and venerated through the ages, its words and message have been zealously perpetuated—often in the face of vilification, imprisonment or even death—whether by word of mouth, or by laborious hand copying, until with the invention of printing by movable metal type it was honored by being the first complete book thus produced. Since that time it has never been off the press in some language or edition.

The story of its preservation, transmission and translation is an intensely interesting one, and the object of this book is to provide a brief but accurate record of the heritage and history of our ageless Bible, from the earliest

known manuscripts down to the translations most widely used in our own day.

The majority of the articles which formed the basis of the original edition of this volume were copyrighted, having already appeared in print, and the author again wishes to express his appreciation for permission to republish them together with additional material.

Since the work first appeared, there have been remarkable evidences of progress and discovery in the wide fields of Biblical translation and research, and this extended and revised edition takes account of such developments, with special reference to the significance of the Revised Standard Version Bible, and of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Its scope does not permit of extended treatment of the subject in hand, but reference is made to other more lengthy and often more specialized works in the course of the text, while a carefully selected Bibliography provides further guidance for those wishing to pursue the study in greater detail.

The renewed close examination of the Book of Books and of many of its numerous manuscripts and versions in their historical and linguistic setting, entailed in the preparation of this new edition, has brought ever increasing interest and enlightenment to the author and it is sincerely hoped that these will be shared by the reader.

THOMAS LINTON LEISHMAN

Greenwich, Connecticut
January, 1960

Contents

Preface 7

I. *Manuscripts and Versions of the Old Testament* 11

The Ancient Hebrew Manuscripts and Their Characteristics—The Origin of the Septuagint, and Its Translators—The Value of the Septuagint—The Samaritan Version and Its Importance—The Versions of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion.

II. *The Language of the New Testament* 27

The Greek of the New Testament—Aramaic, Jesus' Mother Tongue—The Aramaic Logia of Matthew—The Translator's Debt to the Papyri.

III. *The Manuscripts of the New Testament* 41

The Form and Writing of the Early New Testament Manuscripts—The Sinaitic Manuscript—The Vatican Manuscript—The Alexandrian Manuscript—The Codices of Ephraem and of Beza.

IV. *Early Latin and Syriac Versions* 55

The Old Latin Version—The Vulgate—Early Syriac Versions—The Peshitta Syriac Version.

V. *The Task of the Biblical Translator* 67

VI. *Early Versions in English* 77

The Earliest English Versions—John Wycliffe and His Bible—William Tyndale and His Bible—Coverdale's Bible.

VII. *From Coverdale to the King James Version* 91

"Matthew's Bible" and the "Great Bible"—Taverner's Bible and the "Breeches Bible"—The Bishops' Bible and the Rheims-Douai Bible.

VIII. *The Authorized or King James Version* 101

King James and the Authorized Version—The Sources of the Authorized Version—The Translators of the Authorized Version—The Triumph of the Authorized Version.

IX. *The Revised Version and Other Modern Renderings Prior to 1940* 113

The Revised Version—The American Standard Version—Other Modern Versions Prior to 1940.

X. *The Revised Standard Version* 123

XI. *The Dead Sea Scrolls* 139

Bibliography 153

Index 155

CHAPTER ONE

Manuscripts and Versions of the Old Testament

CHAPTER ONE

THE ANCIENT HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

In order to gain some appreciation of the problems which confront the student of the original Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament, it is well that one should pause to consider some of their peculiar characteristics. Most scholars are agreed that, as originally composed, the Old Testament books were devoid of punctuation—the letters being set down continuously, that is, without any division between the words or even between the sentences. When we bear in mind that at this early period the Hebrew language consisted solely of consonants, it becomes evident that difficulties of interpretation might readily present themselves. It is as though a very familiar passage from our English Bible (Deut. 33: 27) were set down as follows: THTRNLGDSTHRFGNDNDRNTHRTHVRLSTNGRMS. This might appear to present an all but insuperable obstacle to a correct understanding of what had been said, since, in any language, a given series of consonants generally represents many different words according

to the vowels which are added to it, and the way in which the letters are grouped; though we may well remember that while certain systems of shorthand practically dispense with the use of vowels, those who are acquainted with these systems can read the characters with ease and accuracy. Nevertheless, as time went by, the Jews themselves began to realize the disadvantages and ambiguities inherent in their method of writing.

Two of the earliest steps taken in attempting to remedy the difficulty seem to have been the introduction of what are known as "vowel-letters"—which were simply certain Hebrew consonants arbitrarily selected to represent the more important vowel sounds—and the leaving of a space between each word. These were definite aids towards the simplification of the text, but still there were no vowels in the usual sense of the term.

At length, about the seventh or eighth century A.D., there arose a famous school of Jewish scholars later known as "the Masoretes." This word is derived from the Hebrew term *Masorah,* meaning "tradition," and these men were described as "Masoretes" ("Traditionalists") because they introduced an ingenious and elaborate system of vowel-signs which standardized the "traditional" pronunciation of what the Bible writers had set down many centuries before. The Masoretes, however, feeling that the consonants alone constituted the original and inspired text, and should not be in any degree displaced to make way for the new vowels, added their minute vowel-signs and punctuation

marks above, below, and sometimes within the basic consonants. Then, too, these men felt that they were the divinely appointed guardians of the sacred text, and for that reason they studied and copied it with the utmost care, in a sincere and praiseworthy effort to preserve it intact for future generations. With this end in view they enumerated such details as the exact number of words in every book, and the middle word of each book, noting carefully any peculiarities of orthography that these, too, might remain unchanged, while they added in the margin various notes as aids to the reader or translator.

Passing from the work of the Masoretes, who did so much to preserve and to clarify the text of the earlier part of our Bible, we turn to inquire as to the nature and date of the Hebrew manuscripts now in our possession. We still have many manuscripts of the New Testament which date from the early centuries of our era, being thus separated from the original autographs of the evangelists and apostles by a comparatively short period of time; but the situation with regard to the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament is very different.

The latest Old Testament book seems to have been completed shortly before 150 B.C., yet until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in our own day (see Chapter XI), the earliest Hebrew manuscripts extant went back no further than the tenth, or possibly the ninth century A.D., many centuries later than all the more important codices of the New Testament. Moreover, while there is a very large

number of slight variations between the different Greek manuscripts, the manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible which have been preserved for us as a result of the labors of the Masoretes—and even most of the Dead Sea Scrolls, dating from up to a thousand years earlier—exhibit a surprisingly close similarity even in points of detail.

Both these phenomena—the absence until 1947 or later of early Hebrew manuscripts and the remarkable uniformity of those we have—seem to be largely due to the ancient Jewish custom of destroying manuscripts which showed any evidences of imperfection, whether due simply to wear and tear, or to variation from the approved and authorized text. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the intense reverence of the Hebrew people for their sacred writings, and the meticulous care with which they have always sought to copy them, have contributed to the preservation of these writings in a form which, we may well believe, approximates closely to what was originally penned by the prophets and poets, the priests and historians, of ancient Israel.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SEPTUAGINT, AND ITS TRANSLATORS

During the five or six centuries immediately preceding the birth of Jesus, large numbers of Jews left Palestine and settled at various points throughout the then known world. This migratory movement had started with the

enforced sojourn of the Hebrew people in Babylon, while, as the years went by, numerous Jewish colonies sprang up in Cyprus and in Asia Minor, in Greece and in Italy, and particularly by the Nile. Many of those who now lived in Egypt had originally been brought there as prisoners of war, while others had chosen to settle in that region in furthering their business enterprises. Eventually there came to be a very large and prosperous Jewish population especially in and around Alexandria near the mouth of the Nile. Those Jews who had been born in Egypt very naturally learned the use of Greek, which was fast becoming the language of commerce and of daily intercourse in Alexandria and Rome, as well as in Athens and Corinth—and the Hebrew so dear to their ancestors was virtually a dead language as far as these Jewish expatriates were concerned. However, they retained their love for the Hebrew religion, and there arose among them an ever-increasing desire for a version of the Jewish Bible in the Greek to which they were accustomed. That desire at length bore fruit in the preparation of the famous Greek translation commonly described as "the Septuagint"—a word which is derived from the Latin term *septuaginta,* meaning "seventy"—the approximate number of those who are said to have carried out the rendering; hence its identifying symbol *LXX.*

Tradition provides us with a more picturesque, if in some respects less historical explanation of the inception of this famous translation. An early writer relates that a

certain Ptolemy Philadelphus, ruler of Egypt in the third century B.C., was desirous of obtaining a rendering of the Hebrew Bible for his library at Alexandria, and that he sent to Eleazar, the high priest of the temple at Jerusalem, to obtain a copy of the Jewish Scriptures together with seventy-two competent scholars, six to be selected from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The record continues that as an expression of gratitude to Eleazar and his countrymen for complying with these requests, the Egyptian monarch agreed to purchase the release of no fewer than one hundred thousand Jewish captives who were then living in his dominions, a statement which, of itself, plainly points to the residence in Egypt of a very large Jewish population. It is further stated that a certain Demetrius Phalerus, one of King Ptolemy's advisers, conducted the seventy-two chosen translators to a small island near the mouth of the Nile, and that there he wrote down the renderings on which they agreed.

This account of the origin of the Septuagint helps to explain the undoubted veneration with which that important version of the Old Testament was regarded from a very early period. Moreover, there is general agreement among scholars that it was indeed commenced in Egypt during the third century B.C., and completed either then or during the following century under the auspices of one or more of the kings of that period, while the fact remains that the underlying necessity for its publication is surely to be sought in the practical requirements of the Greek-

speaking Jewish colonists who lived there in such large numbers.

THE VALUE OF THE SEPTUAGINT

Since the Septuagint, the origin of which has just been considered, is one of the sources most constantly studied by the conscientious translator of the Old Testament in our own day (see page 71) it is fitting that the student of the English Bible should know something both of its significance and of its value as a witness to the original text of the Jewish Scriptures.

One of the prime points in favor of this version is that it was based on very ancient Hebrew manuscripts—manuscripts earlier even than a majority of those found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is true that the text of the Septuagint itself has suffered in the course of its transmission through the centuries and that those who originally prepared it often manifestly misunderstood the sense of the Hebrew original; nevertheless, there are many instances in which the Greek translation suggests what may well be the true meaning of words or sentences which seem to have been incorrectly transcribed in the Hebrew text as we have it today (see pages 71f.). Then, too, the Septuagint translators often preserve words or phrases which were evidently represented in the very early Hebrew manuscripts from which they made their rendering, but have since been inadvertently omitted.

For example, the Septuagint version of Isaiah 9: 6 contains a phrase which is lacking in the ordinary Hebrew text, and which appears to have been overlooked by commentators. The concluding portion of that verse may be literally translated from the Greek: "I will bring peace upon the princes, and health by him"; and since the remainder of the passage is universally accepted as foretelling the mission of the Messiah, we are surely justified in assuming that the Septuagint has rescued from oblivion a striking prediction of the healing activity taught and practiced by Christ Jesus (cf. Matt. 4: 23; 10: 1, 8.).

It is a significant historical fact that when the New Testament writers introduced quotations from the Jewish Scriptures, we find that in a great many cases they give these quotations word for word from the Septuagint without undertaking to provide a fresh rendering from the original Hebrew; and even when they do not cite the Greek version directly, the influence of its phraseology is clearly apparent.

Moreover, it may be recalled that in the early centuries, as in modern times, Hebrew was a language which was not widely known outside Palestine, but when the Septuagint scholars provided the Old Testament in Greek (which may almost be described as the "English" of the ancient world), they made available to the people of many lands the great teachings and prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures, thus preparing the way for the acceptance of the message of Christ Jesus, who came not to destroy, but to

fulfill "the Law and the Prophets" (cf. Matt. 5: 17). "Greek Judaism with the Septuagint," writes Professor Deissmann, "ploughed the furrows for the gospel seed in the Western world" (*New Light on the New Testament,* page 95); while Dr. Angus affirms that, in his judgment: "The Septuagint version of the Old Testament is, next to the New Testament, the most world-historic book" (*Environment of Early Christianity,* page 158).

THE SAMARITAN VERSION AND ITS IMPORTANCE

In the days of Nehemiah, that is during the fifth century B.C., one Manasseh, grandson of Eliashib, the Jewish high priest, married Nicaso, the daughter of the Samaritan leader Sanballat (cf. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews,* XI, viii, 2). Since even at that early date the Jewish authorities were strongly opposed to the Samaritans on both political and religious grounds (II Kings 17: 24, 34; Ezra 4: 4f.; Neh. 4: 1–8), Manasseh's action led to his summary expulsion from the priesthood (Neh. 13: 28). Thereupon, he and his father-in-law, Sanballat, established a rival temple on Mount Gerizim in Samaria, and there Manasseh exercised the priestly functions which had been denied him on Mount Zion. Moreover, it is now generally accepted that when he left Jerusalem, he took with him a copy of the sacred Hebrew *Torah* or "book of the law" usually described in English as the "Pentateuch" (Genesis to Deuteronomy) and this became the only sacred Scripture

of the Samaritan community, being now commonly known as the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Samaritans, then, for more than twenty-three hundred years, have accepted only these five books, and take no account of the remainder of the Hebrew Bible, including the Prophets, Psalms and other writings.

One of the interesting characteristics of this Samaritan version is that it retains to this day an early and primitive form of Hebrew script which seems to date from the time when the original manuscript was first removed from Jerusalem by Manasseh—whereas the Hebrew Scriptures as preserved by the orthodox Jews are written in the so-called "square" or "Assyrian" Hebrew characters which are still in use. Tradition has it that this "Assyrian" writing was first introduced by Ezra, in the fifth century B.C., though there seems no doubt that the change was not actually completed until somewhat later.

At Nablus (the ancient Shechem) in Samaria there is a colony of about two hundred Samaritans, who still cherish in their synagogue two manuscripts of great antiquity, written in the archaic Hebrew characters, and each comprising the Book of the Law by which their ancestors laid such store. The older of the two is enclosed in a case of wrought silver and gold, and in the course of a conversation with the present writer, the Samaritan high priest claimed that it was no less than 3,579 years old! True, it is reputed to bear an inscription to the effect that the scribe who wrote this copy completed his task "in the thirteenth

year of the settlement of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan," but the genuineness of this note is disputed. The second manuscript, the one now generally shown to visitors, is kept in a silver case and is said to have been in existence for some 2,000 years. While one may feel inclined to question the extreme antiquity, and exact dating, especially of the earlier of the two manuscripts, the historical importance of both copies remains unquestioned.

A study of this Samaritan Version, as it has come down to us, makes plain its defects, as well as its virtues. Its main significance lies in the fact that it represents an independent witness to the text of the Pentateuch as it existed at an early period, since we may justly assume that the continued and increasing enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans (cf. John 4: 9) would prevent any comparison or harmonization of their sacred writings; and it is encouraging to find that despite this independent transmission of the Hebrew and Samaritan "editions" of the first five books of our Bible, they remain in substantial agreement.

The chief defect of the Samaritan Version is that in places it seems to have been altered in an attempt to simplify difficult passages, or even for frankly controversial reasons. For example, where our English translation (based upon the Hebrew text) records that an altar was to be built upon Mount Ebal (Deut. 27: 4), the Samaritan Version substitutes a reference to Mount Gerizim, apparently

in an effort to justify the erection of the Samaritan temple on that particular site.

Changes such as these warn us to be on our guard against accepting the sole witness of the Samaritan Pentateuch in preference to the Hebrew text; but the Samaritan Version is of real importance when it corroborates the suggestions of other early versions, such as the Greek or Syriac, so adding its testimony to the cumulative evidence in favor of, or against, the wording of any given passage.

THE VERSIONS OF AQUILA, SYMMACHUS, AND THEODOTION

Despite the very real importance, and general acceptance of the Septuagint, prepared in Egypt about the third century B.C., there were other scholars who, in the succeeding centuries, undertook the provision of alternative Greek renderings of the Hebrew Scriptures. Three of these translations are worthy of note, and are associated with the names of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion.

The earliest, and in some respects the most significant of these three versions is that of Aquila, who is supposed to have written about A.D. 150. The orthodox Jews of his day were decidedly prejudiced against the Septuagint, feeling, apparently, that its translators did not abide sufficiently closely by the details and idiom of the Hebrew. In seeking to obviate any criticism of this sort, Aquila, himself a student of the famous Rabbi Akiba, provided a

rendering which is on the whole amazingly literal—so much so that it is often conspicuously lacking in literary style—and yet this very literalism is of abiding value, since it clearly suggests the original Hebrew words which Aquila had before him. An interesting tradition informs us that in his youth, Aquila had been partly converted to Christianity, but on suffering a stern reprimand from the Christian authorities because of his persistence in unorthodox beliefs, he became an ardent supporter of Judaism, producing his Greek version of the Old Testament with a view to upholding Jewish orthodoxy and offsetting the influence of the Septuagint which has sometimes been called "the Bible of the Early Christians," because of their constant references to that translation. Some find evidence of this supposed polemical bias in the fact that though the Greek *Christos* ("Christ") is admittedly synonymous with the Hebrew *Mashiach* ("Messiah"), Aquila goes out of his way to translate *Mashiach* by some other Greek word. Whatever his purpose may have been, we know that his rendering won great popularity among the Jews.

What little information has come down to us with regard to the background of Symmachus is somewhat contradictory, for while Eusebius affirms that he was an Ebionite ("a kind of semi-Christian"), Epiphanius would have us believe that he was a Samaritan who became an orthodox Jew—surely an unlikely transformation! In any event, he prepared a Greek version of the Old Testament

towards the close of the second century A.D. The most outstanding characteristic of Symmachus' work is that he succeeds in giving a masterly rendering of the Hebrew original in good idiomatic Greek—indeed he seems to have been equally conversant with both languages. The chief defect of his otherwise fine rendering is that in certain sections he is apt to paraphrase rather than to translate the text before him.

Theodotion, who hailed from Ephesus, has been variously described as an Ebionite and as a proselyte to Judaism, and in his approach to the problem of providing a translation of the Old Testament, he differed somewhat from his predecessors. He adhered much more closely to the Septuagint than did either Aquila or Symmachus; and he may be said to have provided a comprehensive revision of that famous Alexandrian version rather than a new translation.

Each of these three writers, then, played his individual part in making known the Jewish Scriptures in the language of the New Testament; and their work is still of value to the Biblical scholar—yet, first and last, the Septuagint rightfully retains its position as the most outstanding Greek version of the Old Testament produced in the early centuries, or, for that matter, in any age.

CHAPTER TWO

The Language of the New Testament

CHAPTER TWO

THE GREEK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The language of the New Testament long constituted a perplexing problem to the Biblical scholar, for while the earliest extant manuscripts were undoubtedly written in Greek, it was equally obvious that this Greek could not be said to conform strictly to classical standards. Those who had been trained to study and use the highly polished phrases and elaborate construction favored by such classic authors as Euripides and Plato were at a loss to account for a certain bluntness of expression, a homeliness and seeming irregularity of form and of sentence structure characteristic of all, or nearly all, of the New Testament writers; and, for a time, it became the custom to condemn the style, grammar and vocabulary of the apostles and evangelists, or, at the best, to make excuses for them. It was assumed that "New Testament Greek" constituted a strange and indeed a unique dialect, and that its departure from the literary models then approved was due either to the admittedly humble origin of its writers, or to the fact that they were unconsciously influenced by Aramaic, which

most of them had known since childhood. Other critics went further, bluntly affirming that the language of the New Testament was simply "bad Greek." However, of late years, and especially during the last few decades, archaeological discovery has come forward to play its part in vindicating the authors of the New Testament.

About the turn of the century, very ancient papyrus manuscripts began to be unearthed in increasing numbers, particularly in Egypt, where the dry sand had aided in their preservation for almost two thousand years. Moreover, as the work of deciphering these first, second and third century fragments proceeded, it became increasingly evident that they were inscribed with the very same kind of Greek which is used in the books of the New Testament (see pages 36f.). Then, too, the subject matter of these Egyptian manuscripts was of considerable interest, for they were not elaborate essays or treatises, but intensely human documents, consisting chiefly of personal, social and business correspondence of that bygone age.

Thus it was proved that "New Testament Greek," so far from being an isolated phenomenon, as had been supposed, was simply the language or dialect almost universally used in the early centuries of our era. It was the graphic homely speech of everyday life. It had not, and had never claimed to possess, the rigid accuracy beloved of the pedant, but exhibited that peculiar vividness which comes from daily conversational use. So, when the evangelists and apostles recorded for all ages the truths of the Christian revelation,

they were not using what had long been regarded as the only legitimate language of literature, but were setting down the story of the Gospel and of its development in the familiar colloquial Greek of the day, known among scholars as the *Koiné* (or, more fully, *Koiné dialektos*), that is, the dialect "Common" to the people as a whole. The use of this type of Greek contributes not a little to the remarkably clear and effective presentation of the teachings of Christianity. The New Testament in Greek, like our familiar Authorized Version, was the book of the people, and announced its message of salvation and of healing with matchless simplicity and forthright directness, in a tongue which all could understand.

ARAMAIC, JESUS' MOTHER TONGUE

During the centuries immediately preceding the birth of Jesus, Hebrew, as a spoken language, gradually fell into disuse, being displaced by the more colloquial dialect known as Aramaic. Evidence of this gradual change is to be found even in the days of Nehemiah, who lived about 450 B.C., for when the Book of the Law was published, it is supposed by scholars that it was first read in Hebrew, but that when the readers "gave the sense, and caused [the people] to understand the reading" (Neh. 8: 8) they were translating it into Aramaic for the benefit of those who were unfamiliar with the more literary language. In the book of Acts (1: 19) the typically Aramaic place name "Aceldama"

—given to the field purchased by Judas—is said to be in the "proper tongue" of "all the dwellers at Jerusalem"; and if Jerusalem itself, the very center of Jewish orthodoxy, deigned to accept Aramaic thus wholeheartedly, its use throughout Palestine may surely be taken for granted.

Aramaic, then, was the mother tongue of Jesus, and the greater part of his teaching was undoubtedly delivered in that language, though the fact remains that the Gospels as they have come down to us are written in Greek. Scholars have long sought a rational explanation of this phenomenon. Some contend that these Gospels, whether in whole or in part, were originally composed in Aramaic and later rendered into Greek; though others, while admitting that the Master ordinarily spoke Aramaic, feel that his sayings were first recorded in Greek, since that tongue was understood by many living in Palestine, while, further afield, it was used almost everywhere, and so would form the natural medium for the propagation of a universal gospel. Jesus himself doubtless used Greek in his occasional interviews with Gentiles (e.g., Mark 7: 26; John 12: 20ff.) but there seems no doubt that Aramaic remained his basic mode of expression.

Fragments of the original Aramaic employed by the Master are still to be found in the Gospels, and these brief records of the very words of the great Teacher are of not a little significance, since it would seem that in each instance they are incorporated in the Gospel story at a particularly dramatic moment, or as expressing some especially deep

emotion. When Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead he cried: *Talitha cumi!* ("Little girl, arise!": cf. Mark 5: 41); while after sighing deeply on being confronted with one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, the Saviour of men cured him with a word,— *Ephphatha!* ("Be opened!": cf. Mark 7: 34).

It is but natural that one of Jesus' last sentences on the cross should also have been recorded in his native Aramaic: *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*—words which have usually been taken as a quotation from Psalm 22: 1, and have been rendered: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15: 34). However, Galilean Aramaic differed slightly from that employed in Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 26: 73), and since some of the bystanders understood *Eloi* as meaning "Elias" instead of "My God" (Mark 15: 35) it may very well be that they also failed to grasp the significance of the words which followed. A contemporary Aramaic scholar, George M. Lamsa, suggests the following interesting rendering for the phrase under discussion, "My God, My God, for this I was kept,"— in other words—"This was my destiny" (*My Neighbor Jesus,* page 136); as though the Master were pointing out that in some respects the crucifixion constituted the crowning event of his career, being the inevitable prelude to the resurrection and subsequent ascension.

THE ARAMAIC LOGIA OF MATTHEW

The early Christian writer Papias, who lived during the second century A.D., is quoted by Eusebius as asserting that: "Matthew . . . wrote the Logia in the Hebrew dialect" —that is, in Aramaic—"but each one interpreted [or 'translated'] them as he was able" (cf. Eusebius: *Ecclesiastical History,* III, 39). Now the word *logia* means literally "oracles" or "sayings," but is constantly employed in a more restricted sense with special reference to the sayings of Christ Jesus. It was long supposed that Matthew's "Logia" was simply another name for the canonical Gospel which bears his name, and which, on this hypothesis, was first written in Aramaic and afterwards translated into Greek. More recent researches, however, have led a majority of scholars to the conclusion that Matthew's Gospel was not translated from an Aramaic original, but was "quite clearly a Greek composition," as Dr. McNeile expresses it; and the consensus of opinion now is that the Logia mentioned in Eusebius' volume formed a document dealing briefly with the Master's activities and discourses—prepared by Matthew in the colloquial Aramaic ordinarily used by Jesus and his disciples—and that after a time it appeared in various Greek versions or translations, as Eusebius suggests.

It is considered one of the chief sources which were employed by Matthew himself, and also by Luke, when they composed their Gospels; indeed the collection is often

briefly designated as "Q" (the initial letter of the German word *Quelle* or "source"), thus suggesting its basic importance.

That it antedated all four of our canonical Gospels is now generally conceded, but in fixing the actual time of its composition there is less unanimity of opinion. In any case it seems to have been contemporary with the earlier epistles of Paul.

There is now general agreement among scholars that the Gospel of Mark, besides being the shortest of the four narratives of Jesus' ministry, was also the first to be written, and that Matthew and Luke, writing some years later, employed two main sources: namely, Mark's Gospel—which is incorporated almost entirely by both these evangelists—and the Logia, which may be said to consist essentially of those Gospel passages which are common to both Matthew and Luke, but are not found in Mark.

The nature and extent of such parallel passages can readily be seen by consulting any "Harmony of the Gospels," in which identical or closely similar paragraphs are printed in parallel columns. As far as can be ascertained, "Q" was far from being a formal document; it was a notebook rather than a biography, being very loosely put together, with little attempt at presenting a definite sequence of statements or events. Thus, while Matthew usually groups these in accord with subject matter, Luke tends to place them in chronological order. Despite the fact that our direct knowledge of Matthew's notebook is all too

scanty, this in no way detracts from its vital importance, for it is justly considered as having formed one of the primary sources of our canonical Gospels.

THE TRANSLATOR'S DEBT TO THE PAPYRI

An examination of the text of the New Testament shows plainly that it contains many words which are entirely unknown in what is commonly called "classical" Greek. For many centuries, the translations offered for such terms were mainly conjectural, owing to the fact that scholars had not been able to discover manuscripts composed in the more colloquial Greek used by the New Testament writers—manuscripts which could provide illuminating parallels to the unfamiliar words and idioms which perplexed the translators of the Bible. Even as late as 1863, this constituted a very real problem, for in that year Bishop Lightfoot, one of the most noted Biblical scholars of his day, is reported to have said to his class at Cambridge University: "If we could only recover letters that ordinary people wrote to each other without any thought of being literary, we should have the greatest possible help for the understanding of the language of the New Testament generally." Since these words were spoken, the hope which they express has been fulfilled.

Since the closing years of the nineteenth century innumerable papyrus fragments have been brought to light, mainly in Egypt, and it is evident that as a rule their preser-

vation has been due to accident rather than to design, for many of them were unearthed in the rubbish heaps of ruined cities. They lay no claim to be "literature" in the usual sense of that word, for most of them are brief personal and business notes or letters; nevertheless they are of vital interest to the student of the Bible. Not only do they present a vivid picture of the lives and problems of men, many of whom were contemporaries of Jesus and his apostles, but they provide the translator with a means of discovering the usage and idiom of words and phrases which hitherto had been known only from the New Testament—just as Dr. Lightfoot had foreseen.

The practical use of these papyri in clarifying Biblical passages can best be suggested by the examination of a few concrete examples.

In the midst of a passage expressing gratitude for the constant financial support supplied by the Philippians, Paul writes: "I have all, and abound" (Phil. 4: 18—Authorized Version); but the statement is even more definite when we learn from the papyri that in the apostle's day the verb rendered "have" was used idiomatically in the sense of "to sign a receipt for." Hence Dr. Milligan translates: "I give you a receipt in full for all things, and abound" (*Here and There Among the Papyri,* page 69).

The same apostle tells us that Abraham's faith "was imputed to him for righteousness" (Rom. 4: 22); but how much more vivid the meaning becomes when we realize that in the papyri the verb translated "impute" meant

simply "to put down to one's account"! The patriarch's faith, then, was "credited to his account as righteousness."

Then when Peter is supposed to speak of "the trial [*dokimion*] of your faith" as "much more precious than of gold. . . ." (I Pet. 1: 7), the papyri suggest rather "the genuineness of your faith," since in them the word *dokimion* refers to the result of any test, rather than to the test itself.

One of the most striking examples of the help afforded to the translator by these early fragments of papyrus is to be found in I Peter 2: 2, where our Authorized Version has the peculiar phrase, "the sincere milk of the word"; and the Revised Version suggests, "milk which is without guile." Now each of these renderings represents an attempt to translate the Greek word *adolos,* which is apparently compounded of *a-* ("not" or "without") and *dolos* (which usually means "guile"), although it is surely evident that the apostle did not intend to refer to "guileless milk"! An examination of the business letters found among the papyri provides the solution of this problem, since they show that the farmers and merchants of the first and second centuries of our era regularly employed the term *adolos* in a special sense, as describing grain which was "unadulterated"—free from sticks, chaff and other foreign matter—or with reference to foodstuffs which were "pure." Thus it seems clear that Peter was using an idiom well known to his contemporaries, and was simply referring to "the pure milk of

the word," or, as the Revised Standard Version has it, "the pure spiritual milk."

Still another passage which has been clarified by reference to the papyri is to be found in Romans 15: 28, where Paul is writing of the collection which has been made among the Gentile churches for the benefit of "the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" (verse 26), and he writes to the Romans (according to the rendering of the King James Version): "When . . . I have . . . sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain." There was considerable doubt as to the exact significance of the verb "sealed" as used in this context, until a clue was provided in a letter composed in the second century A.D. by a woman who wrote to a friend, evidently regarding seed for her garden: "If you come, take out six artabae of vegetable-seed, sealing it in the sacks . . . in order that they may be ready" (Milligan, *Here and There Among the Papyri,* page 73). Thus it would appear that Paul was about to seal up the gift entrusted to his care, that it might be ready to be delivered intact to the church at Jerusalem.

In First Corinthians 1: 7f. we read that "our Lord Jesus Christ . . . shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless"; but the word rendered "confirm" is used in many papyrus documents in a technical sense to imply the giving of security guaranteed by law. (Cf. Deissmann, *Bible Studies,* pages 104ff.) So Dr. Moffatt suggests: "He will guarantee that you are vindicated."

Thus it is evident that the papyri, long hidden in the dry

sands of Egypt, have already proved of great value both to translators and readers of the New Testament, as they seek to grasp the original sense of these and many other passages, and it is probable that as our knowledge of such papyrus documents increases, they will continue to throw light upon the meaning of the apostolic writings.

CHAPTER THREE

The Manuscripts of the New Testament

CHAPTER THREE

THE FORM AND WRITING OF THE EARLY NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

While we do not now possess any of the original autograph manuscripts penned by the evangelists and the apostles, or recorded for them by their secretaries (cf. Rom. 16: 22; I Pet. 5: 12), there is every reason to suppose that these precious documents were sheets or rolls of papyrus, closely resembling in form the earliest copies now extant. This "papyrus" (a term which in the course of time was modified to form our English word "paper") was formed by preparing long ribbon-like strips cut from the pith of the papyrus reed which grew in profusion by the banks of the Nile, and placing these strips vertically side by side, covering them with a similar arrangement of horizontal strips—the two layers being held in place by means of a light glue mixed with water from the Nile. The whole was then placed under pressure and dried, and when its surface had been smoothed and polished, the resultant sheet formed a very serviceable writing material.

The manufacture of papyrus was very far from being a

new art even in the days of the apostles, for there is still in existence a papyrus document which is considered by experts to date from at least 3,500 B.C. Under favorable circumstances, then, papyrus was exceedingly durable, but the vital interest of the Gospels, the Epistles, and other books which ultimately went to make up what we know as the New Testament, led them to be so eagerly read that it is supposed that the earliest manuscripts simply wore out through constant handling, being replaced by carefully transcribed copies.

The pens employed in writing these ancient documents were fashioned from reeds, while the ink commonly used was formed of a mixture of soot and gum diluted with water. Primitive though this type of ink may appear, it says much for its permanence that letters dating from the New Testament period or earlier, and since unearthed in Egypt, can still be read with little difficulty.

We learn from early records that papyrus was ordinarily sold in sheets measuring from 9 to 11 inches in height, and from 5 to 5½ inches in width, and for such a brief note as the Second Epistle of John, a single sheet would doubtless be sufficient. In the case of a more lengthy letter, such as the Epistle to the Romans, the writer would naturally follow the custom of his day by purchasing a number of sheets, glued together side by side so as to form a long strip which could be rolled up for the sake of convenience. Scholars have calculated that the Epistle to the Romans, if inscribed with Greek writing of average size, would re-

quire the use of a papyrus roll eleven feet, six inches, in length, while the Gospel of Luke would extend to something like thirty-one feet (see Kenyon's *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, page 30).

It is evident that such lengthy rolls of papyrus would not be altogether convenient, especially when one wished to find any particular passage, so eventually they gave place to papyrus or parchment *books*, consisting of leaves laid one upon another and bound together after the style of a modern volume. A manuscript book of this type is usually described as a *codex*, and the most famous and complete of the Greek manuscripts which we now possess are of this form, including the Sinaitic, Vatican, Alexandrian and Bezan codices and others, on which our present knowledge of the text of the New Testament is chiefly based.

THE SINAITIC MANUSCRIPT

Of all the famous Greek manuscripts of the Bible, the Sinaitic Manuscript—or Codex Sinaiticus, as it is called by scholars—has probably the most romantic history, besides being in the front rank in historical importance. In the year 1844, a renowned Biblical scholar named Tischendorf, while visiting the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, happened to notice a basket filled with old sheets of vellum which were being used from time to time to feed the fire, and on closer examination he found to his

amazement that the basket contained more than a hundred leaves from a very ancient Greek Bible, later called the Codex Sinaiticus. Some of these leaves he was allowed to retain, being cheerfully informed that many similar pages had already been burned, but he could then learn no news concerning the fate of the remainder of the manuscript, and it was not until fifteen years later, in 1859, during a further visit to the monastery, that he was unexpectedly shown the rest of the book which he found to contain the complete New Testament in addition to much of the Old Testament and of the Apocrypha. His joy at the fulfillment of his hopes may readily be imagined, especially in view of the fact that in recalling the scene, he wrote: "I knew that I held in my hand one of the most precious Biblical treasures in existence." After much negotiation, the monks agreed to present the manuscript to the then Czar of Russia, and it remained in the great library at Leningrad until the close of 1933, when it was purchased by the British nation from the Soviet government, and may now be seen in the British Museum in London.

So much, then, for the vicissitudes of the manuscript during the past century. With regard to its original preparation, there remains some degree of uncertainty, but the general consensus of opinion among scholars is that it dates from the fourth century A.D. Now early records show that about the year A.D. 331 Constantine, the first Christian emperor, wrote to Eusebius the historian, then Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, asking that he arrange for the prepa-

ration of fifty manuscript copies of the Holy Scriptures in Greek, to be inscribed "on prepared parchment in a legible manner . . . by professional transcribers thoroughly practiced in their art" (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine,* IV, 36). These Bibles were to be based upon the evidence of still earlier manuscripts preserved at Cæsarea, which possessed one of the most famous and comprehensive Biblical libraries then in existence. Without describing in detail the reasons adduced by scholars, it may be noted that many of them hold that two of Constantine's fifty Bibles are still in existence—namely the Sinaitic Manuscript now under consideration and the Vatican Manuscript which will be discussed in the next section.

Important though the Sinaitic Manuscript now is as a historical document, its interest to the student of the text of the New Testament is perhaps even more vital. It is true that we possess fragmentary New Testament manuscripts which appear to date from as far back as the beginning of the second century, but the Codex Sinaiticus is the earliest manuscript now extant providing us with the complete New Testament—the book of Revelation and parts of the Epistles being now lacking from its sister manuscript, the Codex Vaticanus.

THE VATICAN MANUSCRIPT

As we have already seen, it would appear that the Vatican Manuscript (or Codex Vaticanus) was, like the Codex

Sinaiticus, prepared about the middle of the fourth century A.D., probably at the instance of the Emperor Constantine, who, on his conversion to the Christian Faith, was eager to spread the message of the Bible among his subjects. It is, however, of interest to note that Westcott and Hort, and other scholars, are inclined to consider the Vatican Codex as the more important of the two, contending that it represents "more than any other the original text of the New Testament."

The Codex Vaticanus, as its name implies, is preserved in the archives of the Vatican at Rome, and we know it to have been there before the year 1475, the date of the first official catalogue of the papal library. At that time, however, few scholars knew of its existence, and none realized its vital importance. It was still at Rome when our Authorized Version of the Bible was prepared in England, but unfortunately the King James translators did not have access to this priceless Biblical treasure. Two centuries later, in the year 1809, the manuscript appeared in Paris, having apparently been carried off from Italy with other precious records, as the spoils of war, during one of Napoleon's campaigns. During its sojourn in Paris it was examined by a professor from Tübingen, who seems to have been the first to recognize its early date, and to realize something of its real importance. Eventually it was returned to the Vatican library, where for many years scholars were not permitted to give it the minute and accurate consideration it deserved, and it was not until almost

the close of the nineteenth century that a photographic edition of the text made it available for study throughout the world.

An examination of these photostatic copies shows that the manuscript was written in Greek capital letters, with three columns to a page, and it is interesting to find that punctuation in the modern sense is practically nonexistent, while, as a rule, there is no division between the words and seldom between the sentences. The verse divisions, so familiar to us from our modern Bibles, were not introduced until some twelve centuries after the preparation of this manuscript.

Originally, the Vatican Codex contained the whole Bible in Greek, but much of the Old Testament is now wanting, as is a portion of the New—namely the Pastoral Epistles of Paul, the book of Revelation, and the latter part of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Nevertheless, the value of the Vatican Manuscript can scarcely be overestimated, for not only does it bring us back to the middle of the fourth century A.D., but it is regarded, like the Codex Sinaiticus, as having been based, in turn, upon the best second century manuscripts then available.

Among the many interesting readings preserved for us by this early document is one which would seem to stress the importance of the active participation of the Master's followers in the wonderful works which he accomplished. When he was about to cure the man who had been born blind, he said, according to the Vatican Manuscript: "We

[not "I"] must work the works of him that sent me" (John 9: 4).

THE ALEXANDRIAN MANUSCRIPT

While the Sinaitic and Vatican codices already discussed are generally regarded as being both the earliest and the most valuable of the New Testament manuscripts which have been preserved to this day practically in their entirety, the Codex Alexandrinus comes next in order of importance. Like the other two it was originally a manuscript of the whole Bible, written in Greek, and though the Old Testament portion is still almost complete, certain sections of the New Testament have unfortunately been lost, including the greater part of the Gospel of Matthew, two leaves from that of John, and three from Second Corinthians. One of the unique characteristics of this codex is that after the book of Revelation we find the First Epistle of one Clement of Rome, a fact which reminds us that this letter was highly esteemed by the early church and came near to being accounted among the *canonical,* or sacred, Scriptures of the New Testament. This same manuscript also contains fragments of a Second Epistle of Clement, which is, however, considered of lesser importance. Another point of interest is that the order of the books in the Codex Alexandrinus varies somewhat from that to which we are accustomed, in that the epistles of Paul immediately precede the book of Revelation, instead of following the book of Acts.

The facts concerning the origin and early history of this famous manuscript are decidedly obscure. In the year 1628, one Cyril Lucar, patriarch of Constantinople (now Istanbul), presented the codex to Charles I of Britain, and shortly after the foundation of the library of the British Museum in 1753, it was placed there for safekeeping, and now rests beside the Codex Sinaiticus in the manuscript room. As Cyril had formerly been patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt, there is good reason to suppose that it was there that he became possessor of this ancient codex, and for this reason it is called the Alexandrian Manuscript—its brief designation, for purposes of reference, being the letter "A." On the flyleaf of the book, Cyril himself recorded the tradition then current concerning its preparation, to the effect that it was "written by the hand of Thecla, an Egyptian woman of noble birth . . . shortly after the council of Nicæa" (which took place in A.D. 325). It is true that a further note, penned in Arabic some three or four centuries before Cyril's time, similarly ascribes the preparation of the manuscript to "Thecla the martyr," but it is now the considered judgment of scholars that it must have been prepared about the middle of the fifth century A.D., rather than early in the fourth, as suggested by the patriarch.

A further interesting point concerning the Codex Alexandrinus is that it was the first of the great Greek Biblical manuscripts to receive any real study and recognition, for it will be recalled that though the Codex Vaticanus had

lain in the archives of the Vatican since before 1475, it was not until the early nineteenth century that its vital importance began to be recognized, while the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus came several decades later still. Had the Alexandrian Manuscript reached England some twenty years sooner than it actually did, it would doubtless have been made available to the scholars who prepared our Authorized Version, yet, even without its aid, they succeeded in giving to the world that inimitable rendering which we know so well.

THE CODICES OF EPHRAEM AND OF BEZA

The Codex of Ephraem, often designated by the letter "C," now rests in the National Library at Paris, though it may have come originally from Egypt. It is what is called a *palimpsest*—a word which by its derivation implies that which has been "wiped [or rubbed-out] again." The justice of this description becomes readily apparent when we consider the vicissitudes through which this codex, like other early writings, has passed. In the Middle Ages, vellum or parchment was somewhat costly, and it was not unusual for an impecunious writer to wash off or otherwise delete, as far as possible, the writing of an ancient manuscript, afterwards proceeding to use the parchment a second time. This is the fate which befell the Codex of Ephraem, which once contained the whole Bible. It is thought to have been prepared originally in the fifth century A. D., and we still

find in it traces of every New Testament book with the exception of II John and II Thessalonians; though, in the nature of the case, it is not surprising that its script is now only faintly discernible, for in the twelfth century, the treatises of one Ephraem the Syrian (after whom the codex is named) were written over what remained of the original text, and often obliterated it entirely.

Unlike the Sinaitic, Vatican and Alexandrian Manuscripts, which preserve the New Testament complete, or almost complete, the Bezan Codex, which is marked for reference by the letter "D," now contains only the Gospels and the book of Acts, together with a few verses from III John. It is named after one of the sixteenth-century reformers, Théodore de Bèze (or Beza), who in 1581 presented it to the University of Cambridge where it still is. He stated that he had found it in a monastery at Lyons in France, and though its earlier history is veiled in obscurity, it is now generally supposed to date from the sixth century A. D., thus forming a decidedly early witness to the text of the New Testament. In it the Gospels are not set down in the order familiar to us, for Matthew and John appear first, presumably because they were numbered among the twelve apostles, while Luke comes next, and Mark last of all. Another unusual characteristic of the Bezan Codex is that it is the earliest of the more important Biblical manuscripts to be written in both Greek and Latin—the Greek text being inscribed in a single column

on each left hand page, with the Latin rendering facing it. Then, too, it contains a number of noteworthy variations from the other early manuscripts, and indeed it is the only codex extant which inserts after Luke 6: 4 the incident of a man who was working in his field on the Sabbath day, and was addressed by Christ Jesus in the following terms: "O man, if thou knowest what thou doest, happy art thou, but if thou knowest not, thou art cursed and a transgressor of the law." The same manuscript, after relating how "the body of Jesus" was placed by Joseph of Arimathæa in the tomb which he had provided (Luke 23: 53), adds that there was set before the sepulchre a stone so great that "twenty men could hardly roll [it]." While there is some question as to the authenticity of the variations and additions recorded by "D," they at least represent a very early tradition, and are thus of deep interest to the student.

CHAPTER FOUR

Early Latin and Syriac Versions

CHAPTER FOUR

THE OLD LATIN VERSION

As Christianity spread westward from Palestine and became more and more firmly rooted in the farflung dominions of the Roman Empire, it was but natural that the need should arise for renderings of the Bible in Latin, the official language of that empire, and, as a result, there came into existence a number of translations of varying significance which are commonly grouped together under the general title of the "Old Latin" version.

Writing of them at considerable length in an article in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible (Vol. III, page 47), Prof. H. A. A. Kennedy refers to their "unique value" and their "high antiquity," and contends that they are "of primary importance for determining the text of the New Testament." These words of praise surely justify us in examining for a few moments these early Latin renderings, before we proceed to consider the more widely known version usually described as the "Vulgate."

In Italy itself, the focal point of the Roman rule, Greek and Latin seem to have been equally well known during

the early centuries, especially among the upper classes, and because of this, there was at first no special demand for a Latin translation of the Bible, which was already widely circulated in Greek. In North Africa, however, where Roman rule had been firmly established since about 145 B. C.—and where there was from early times a large and growing Christian population—there was a different situation, for there Latin was used almost exclusively. Thus there is general agreement among scholars that the first Latin renderings of the Scriptures appeared not in Asia or in Europe, but in Africa; and it is thought that such translations began to appear not later than A. D. 150; while the famous Christian writer Cyprian, who lived about A. D. 250, seems to quote from a more or less complete Latin translation of the New Testament which was current in Africa in his day. Such representatives of the "Old Latin" as are still extant are not composed in particularly good or idiomatic Latin; rather they provide almost slavishly literal translations of the Greek original. But what they lose in literary style is more than offset by the fact that the extreme literalness of these renderings often enables us to deduce the very words of the early Greek manuscripts on which they were based. This is perhaps the most outstanding service rendered by the Old Latin Version.

Before long "Old Latin" translations appeared in Europe, some of them independently, others being more in the nature of adaptations of the African renderings, as

shown by the occasional retention of provincial idioms typical of the Latin dialect of North Africa. All such versions had their place in spreading a knowledge of the Scriptures, but it is to Jerome that we owe the production of the truly monumental rendering to which we now turn.

THE VULGATE

Towards the close of the fourth century, a certain Damasus, then Bishop of Rome, decided that it was of prime importance for the spread of Christianity that someone should prepare a more standard version of the Bible in Latin, which would improve upon, and ultimately supersede, the various "Old Latin" texts, which were clearly in need of revision. The man whom Damasus forthwith appointed to carry out this important task was his secretary, Eusebius Hieronymus—popularly known as "Jerome" —one who appears to have been well fitted to undertake this work, for he had a good Latin style and had studied Greek assiduously for many years, while he possessed an adequate knowledge of Hebrew.

The version which Jerome at length gave to the world is now known as the Vulgate—a term which derives from the Latin *vulgata,* meaning "common," and which was applied to it because it was intended to be, and eventually became, the commonly accepted Latin version of the Scriptures.

Jerome's work was not entirely that of a translator. In

producing his version of the New Testament, he seems simply to have revised, rather cursorily, certain of the "Old Latin" texts which were then in use, and it may be observed that even this somewhat timid revision aroused a storm of criticism among the conservatives of the day. As regards the Old Testament, however, his work provides much greater evidence of originality. It is true that the Psalms as they now appear in the Vulgate represent, like the New Testament, a revision rather than a fresh translation, but Jerome's rendering of the other books of the Old Testament was made direct from the Hebrew itself, and consequently is of much wider importance from a historical and literary standpoint.

The Vulgate in its present form also contains the books which are known to Protestants as the Apocrypha. This term, commonly applied to books of doubtful inspiration or authority, is far from being a modern one, for it was used by Jerome himself in his original preface to the Vulgate, where he lists the very books now found in the Authorized or King James Version of the Old Testament, adding that "whatever is beyond these is to be placed among the Apocrypha," and that such apocryphal books "are not in the Canon." At the insistence of some of his friends, however, he finally agreed to revise earlier renderings of Judith and Tobit, with the result that these two books came to be included in his version during his lifetime; but the remaining apocryphal books were not

inserted until long after his passing, being then taken from the Old Latin Version.

The Vulgate is of great historical importance, because for about a thousand years—up to the time of the Reformation—it was the chief Bible of the Christian world, while at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) it was recognized as the authentic and authorized Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

In fact, it was the Vulgate which a century earlier (about 1450) had been presented by John Gutenberg, the inventor of printing by movable metal type, as the first Bible, and apparently the first complete book, to be printed by this now familiar process.

EARLY SYRIAC VERSIONS

While the manuscripts of the New Testament, as they have come down to us from the early centuries of our era, are uniformly written in Greek, the facts that Christ Jesus himself knew Aramaic and made a practice of using it in his teachings are sufficient to arouse the student's interest in the latter language. Indeed there seems to be a growing sentiment in favor of the view that the Gospel writings, whether in whole or in part, were originally published in Aramaic, and some would go still further, assuming, though with much less probability, that the whole of the New Testament was composed in this dialect, being later translated into Greek. However this question may be finally

settled, if indeed it can be settled at this late date, it is at least evident that the Christians of Syria, and of other neighboring provinces to the east and northeast, would prefer to study the New Testament in some form of Aramaic, rather than in the less familiar Greek. Evidently with a view to satisfying this need, a Syrian scholar named Tatian composed what is called the Diatessaron (literally "by four"), which consists of passages from the books composed "by" the "four" Gospel writers—this material being so grouped as to provide a connected narrative of the Master's ministry. This version, dating from the second century A. D., was prepared in Syriac (or "Eastern Aramaic") which has been described as "a sister dialect of the Aramaic of Galilee, the dialect spoken there by our Lord and the twelve" (Jennings, *Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament*, page 5), while the same writer adds that "the one differs only slightly from the other."

While in some respects the most interesting of the earlier Syriac versions is this Diatessaron, since it is the earliest known harmony of the four Gospels, reference may here be made to two ancient Syriac manuscripts which have come into prominence during the last hundred years or so.

One of these was unearthed in the Nitrian Desert in Egypt and eventually reached the British Museum in London, where it was examined about 1842 by a scholar named William Cureton, being thenceforth described as the Curetonian Syriac Version. It preserves for us fragments of a translation of the Gospels, and while the manu-

script appears to date from the fifth century of our era, there is little doubt that it records a rendering which had been made some three centuries earlier, possibly about A. D. 150.

Then, just fifty years after Cureton's discovery, Mrs. Agnes Smith Lewis was pursuing some researches in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai—the same monastery in which some decades earlier the great Sinaitic Codex of the Old and New Testaments had come to light (see pages 45f.)—and there she found an early Syriac manuscript which has since been known as the Lewis Syriac or the Sinaitic Syriac. Like the Codex of Ephraem, it was a palimpsest (see page 52), but the greater part of the partially obliterated writing could still be deciphered, and it was found to be a translation of the Gospels lacking only some eight pages of being complete. While the date of the manuscript itself is by no means certain, it, too, is thought to represent a rendering first made in the second century A. D.; indeed some authorities have referred to it as "the oldest translation ever made of the Gospels into Syriac" (cf. Robinson, *Where Did We Get Our Bible?* page 98); or even as "the earliest translation of the Four Gospels into any language" (Agnes S. Lewis, *Old Syriac Gospels,* page v). Among other interesting points it records a variation from the familiar rendering of John 8: 57 ("Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?") in that it has ". . . hath Abraham seen thee?"

THE PESHITTA SYRIAC VERSION

Despite the undoubted significance and antiquity of the early Syriac versions, to some of which reference has just been made, by far the best known of the various renderings used by the Syrian church in the course of the early centuries is referred to as the Peshitta, and it still remains the standard Syriac version of the Scriptures. The Peshitta was for the Syrian church what the Vulgate was for the church of Rome, and like the Vulgate, it was a rendering of the whole Bible; indeed the terms "Peshitta" and "Vulgate" are virtually synonymous, both implying that the version so described was "commonly used and accepted" in its own particular field—while "peshitta" could also be rendered "simple, easily understood."

The man who is credited with the preparation of the Peshitta is a certain Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa during the first half of the fifth century A. D. The version which he prepared or sponsored laid no claim to being a completely new translation; it was simply a revision of the earlier Syriac renderings—a revision made on the basis of the Greek manuscripts to which Rabbula and his friends had access—but, despite this limitation, it is of very considerable importance because of its wide use among the Aramaic-speaking Christians of the East, through many centuries. One of its chief peculiarities is that it omits both the book of Revelation, and four of the lesser Epistles —Second Peter, Second and Third John, and Jude—though

we learn from an examination of previous Syriac versions that these five books were used by members of the Syrian churches.

Professor Thomas Nichol has referred to the Peshitta rendering of the New Testament as "careful, faithful and literal" while he joins with other Syriac scholars in bearing tribute to the "simplicity, directness, and transparency" of its style (*International Standard Bible Encyclopædia* page 2884), and indeed it has earned for itself the proud title of "Queen of the Versions" (ibid.).

CHAPTER FIVE

The Task of the Biblical Translator

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TASK OF THE BIBLICAL TRANSLATOR

No doubt this question has arisen in the mind of many a Bible student on noting the varying renderings of the same passage given by different translators: On what basis, or by what criterion, does the translator evaluate any given passage of Hebrew or Greek, as the case may be, before he seeks to express it in his native tongue? In short: How does he consider and test the authenticity of that particular section? This is a fair question, and one which may well hold our attention for a few moments.

It is almost a truism that one of the most important tasks of the Biblical scholar, and an essential preliminary to translation, is to discover, as far as may be, what was originally written by such men as Amos or Jeremiah in the Old Testament, Matthew or Paul in the New; and this particular branch of study is commonly described as "Lower" or "Textual" Criticism—the task of reconstructing the original text of the Bible—as distinguished from the so-called "Higher" Criticism, which seeks to find out why

and when and where certain books or passages were composed. "Criticism" is, of course, used here in its legitimate and helpful sense of "careful, considered judgment."

Now one of the primary steps in seeking to determine the authenticity of any passage is, very naturally, to compare such manuscripts of the original as are now extant; and in applying this rule to the Hebrew of the Old Testament, we are faced by the rather curious fact, that a large majority of the existing manuscripts agree with one another almost word for word. At first sight this might seem to be a great advantage, but on further study of the subject it becomes plain that this apparent unanimity is indeed only apparent, and that in all probability such manuscripts as dared to disagree with the commonly accepted text were destroyed at an early period (cf. page 16). This is somewhat unfortunate, for there are passages in the "orthodox" text, as we might describe it, which appear to have been incorrectly copied and which might well be corrected by comparison with the variant texts, had they been preserved. In these circumstances, the student of the Old Testament in the original studies each verse in connection with its context, bearing in mind the fact that, as first written, the Hebrew script appears to have been set down without vowels and generally, without division between words and sentences (see page 13). In fact, the authenticity of an Old Testament passage is established, not so much by the comparison and evaluation of different manuscripts, as by estimating the congruity of such a passage

with the apparent style, purpose, and method of the writer of the rest of the book.

Then in view of the surprising uniformity of the available Hebrew manuscripts, the witness of the Septuagint is called in to dispute or corroborate the findings already made. Thus when the Septuagint translation of any verse presupposes a Hebrew text identical with that accepted by the Jewish scholars, the probability is very strong that we have the correct reading; but if the Greek gives one meaning and the "Masoretic Text" another, the scholar goes back to what were apparently the original consonants and seeks to determine how the confusion arose, besides considering the witness of other early versions.

For example: In the Authorized Version rendering of Psalm 15: 4, we read: "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not"; but the Septuagint and Syriac Versions offer the interesting alternative rendering. ". . . to his friend [or neighbor]," bringing out the sense: "He who makes a promise 'to his friend' and does not go back on it." The variation here is due to the fact that the consonants found in the original Hebrew (להרע) can be rendered either "to his hurt" or "to his friend" according to the vowels presupposed by the translator.

The scholar has always to consider the possibility of slips in the copying of the original manuscripts due to the similarity in sound or in appearance of many of the Hebrew letters. For instance: We are accustomed to the rendering of Psalm 91: 13: "Thou shalt tread upon the

'lion' and adder"; but the Greek and Syriac versions suggest the reading זחל (z-ch-l-"asp") instead of שחל (sh-ch-l-"lion"), an emendation which may well be correct, and which is apparently favored by Dr. Moffatt who suggests the rendering "reptiles."

Students of the various English translations of the Old Testament are sometimes disturbed by the divergence between them. It is true that in many passages translators differ considerably in their concept of the sense, owing partly to their doctrinal presuppositions, and largely, as we have seen, to the peculiar nature of the Hebrew language and the fact that the books were written upwards of two thousand years ago. But may we not rather marvel at the remarkable agreement on the main points of the religion and history of Israel? The translations offered by modern scholars are, surely, to be welcomed, not indeed as superseding the pellucid English and majestic cadences of the Authorized Version, but rather as supplementing it, and casting further light upon the pages of the Old Testament, the only "Bible" known to the Founder of Christianity.

Turning to the New Testament and its translation, we encounter a problem which differs somewhat from that which is presented to students of the Hebrew Bible. There, as we have observed, the manuscripts are almost disconcertingly similar, but here the translator has to deal with a very large number of Greek manuscripts which, while agreeing with one another in their main outlines, do show

considerable divergence in matters of detail. In this case the question at once arises as to the method or methods by which the translator is to weigh the evidence for or against any particular reading when manuscript opinion, if one may call it so, seems to be so divided.

In ordinary circumstances it is not only inconvenient, but virtually impossible, for the student to have before him exact copies of all the chief manuscripts which have survived to the present day. For this reason, certain editions of the Greek text are now published with footnotes in which each leading manuscript is represented by a letter or symbol, preceded by the reading found in that manuscript or group of manuscripts. As has already been suggested, the earliest more or less complete manuscripts of the New Testament which we now possess are the Codex Sinaiticus which is known by the symbol ℵ ("Aleph"—the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet), and the Codex Vaticanus ("B"), both of which appear to date from the middle of the fourth century of our era. Then follow the Alexandrian manuscript ("A"), the Codex of Ephraem ("C"), and the Bezan manuscript ("D"), dating evidently from the fifth or sixth century A. D. (see Chapter III). It often happens that two or more of these important codices will agree in giving a certain reading, while the majority of the later manuscripts reject it. In such a case, scholars generally consider that the early witness of these few outstanding codices outweighs the evidence of the majority.

An example of the application of this rule may be drawn

from Revelation 22: 14, where we read, in the words of the Authorized Version, "Blessed are they 'that do his commandments'" (Greek: *poiountes tas entolas autou*) which is the text favored by most of the later manuscripts. However, we find that here the Sinaitic and Alexandrian codices and a few other authorities have ". . . they 'that wash their robes'" (Greek: *plunontes tas stolas auton*), a reading which is followed by the Revised Standard Version and the Twentieth Century New Testament, as well as by other modern translators such as Dr. Weymouth (fifth edition), and Professors Goodspeed and Moffatt. Incidentally, it is readily apparent that it would be quite easy for a scribe to confuse *plunontes tas stolas auton* with the similar appearing *poiountes tas entolas autou.*

Another criterion used by translators is that if there is a choice between two readings, one of which is apparently simple and obvious and the other not so immediately easy to understand, the harder reading is usually to be preferred, since, if the scribe were making any change in his copying, his tendency would surely be towards attempted simplification of the passage, rather than vice versa. The words just cited from Revelation 22: 14 again provide a case in point, since the reference to the blessedness of them "that wash their robes" may at first seem strange—though, as a matter of fact, Revelation 7: 14ff. appears to explain this figure of speech.

What are known as the "Ancient Versions" (see Chapter IV)—which include early translations of the New Testa-

ment into Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian and other languages—are often of service in any attempt to reconstruct the original text, for one can generally deduce from them the Greek words from which the early translator made his rendering, and thus gain that much more evidence for or against the reading which we have assumed to be correct from our comparison of the manuscripts.

Then, too, further evidence is to be found in the Biblical quotations made by early Christian writers, such as Ignatius and Clement of Alexandria in the second century A. D., and Origen and Cyprian in the third—writers who presumably had access to very early Greek manuscripts and whose statements are therefore worthy of careful consideration.

It is by the use of methods such as these that the conscientious translator and student of the original languages of our Bible considers and tests the authenticity of the various passages, in an effort to determine as nearly as possible the actual words and phrases set down by the Biblical writers many centuries before our time.

It should be borne in mind that it is only within the past century that some of the earliest and most important of the existing Biblical manuscripts—notably the Sinaitic and Vatican codices—have become readily available to scholars, who weigh with the greatest care the new evidence thus presented. In short, it seems that modern research in the fields of Biblical language and archaeology, and in kindred subjects, has done much to bridge the gap

of the almost two thousand years which separate us from the original documents penned by the disciples of the Master, and the still greater period of time which has elapsed since the preparation of the books of the Old Testament. It also seems that we are now in an increasingly favorable position to reconstruct the original text of the Bible and to render it accurately and idiomatically into the language of today.

CHAPTER SIX

Early Versions in English

CHAPTER SIX

THE EARLIEST ENGLISH VERSIONS

THE first, and for long the only version of the Bible known in England was the Latin Vulgate, and consequently knowledge of the Scriptures made little or no headway among the common folk. Yet as early as the close of the seventh century A. D. some portions of the Bible began to appear in the vernacular. One of the earliest of those who contributed to this development was Caedmon, a cowherd who lived near the famed Abbey of Whitby, in Yorkshire. Despite his humble birth and seeming lack of culture, he longed to express himself in verse, and the story goes that in a vision he heard a divine voice which bade him sing "the beginning of created things." Thus inspired, he sang the story of creation, following this with songs recounting many of the chief narratives of the Old and New Testaments. While Caedmon's rendering was a free paraphrase rather than a translation, it none the less prepared the way for the Bible in the common tongue.

Then, one Aldhelm, a contemporary of Caedmon, is credited with a translation of the Psalms—but the most

outstanding translator in this early period was the Venerable Bede, a monk who lived at the Northumbrian monastery of Jarrow-on-Tyne. Unlike Caedmon, Bede was a famous scholar and his *Ecclesiastical History* is still a classic, while Bible commentaries, books on astronomy, rhetoric and other subjects, came from the pen of this prolific writer. But to the student of the English Bible, his last work forms his most memorable accomplishment, for shortly before his passing he decided to leave the Gospel of John in early English as a legacy to his students. It seemed for a time as though he would not be able to complete the final chapter, but eventually the young scribe to whom he was dictating was able to report, "It is finished." "Thou hast spoken truly, 'It is finished,' " replied the aged monk, echoing a phrase which he had but recently translated (John 19: 30), and, indeed, these proved to be his last words.

About a century later, another outstanding champion of the Bible in the language of the people appeared in the person of King Alfred the Great, who is said to have decreed that "all the freeborn youth of his kingdom should employ themselves on nothing till they could first read well the English Scripture." It is typical of Alfred's interest in the Bible that he prefaces the laws of his kingdom with the Ten Commandments which he himself rendered into Anglo-Saxon, while it is recorded that towards the close of his reign he commenced a translation of the book of Psalms.

The tenth century witnessed the work of Aldred, who prepared what are called the Lindisfarne Gospels, so named from a small island off the east coast of England where they are said to have been translated; and of Abbot Aelfric, who not only encouraged his clergy to "tell the people the sense of the Gospel *in English,*" but himself translated a considerable portion of the Old Testament. Then the thirteenth-century Ormulum (a metrical paraphrase of the Gospels and of the book of Acts), and the Psalter attributed to Richard Rolle, "the Hermit of Hampole" in the early fourteenth century, also prepared for the monumental work of Wycliffe, Tyndale and others. Thus, in those early days, king and cowherd, abbot and lonely hermit, all aided in transmitting the priceless heritage of Holy Writ.

JOHN WYCLIFFE AND HIS BIBLE

John Wycliffe was born near Richmond in Yorkshire about the year 1324, and proceeded from there to Oxford where he received his education, becoming in due course Master of Balliol College. It was not long, however, before he resigned from this position and turned his attention more particularly to writing and preaching. Appalled by the abuses with which he came in contact in the pre-Reformation church and feeling that these abuses were largely the result of a misinterpretation of the Bible, Wycliffe decided that one of the most effective ways of

putting a stop to what was going on was for him to make it possible for the people as a whole to read the Scriptures in their native English, and to judge for themselves as to their meaning. It is true that before this time, as noted above (see pages 79ff.), there had been various partial attempts to fill this need, but Wycliffe deserves all due credit as being the first man to provide a complete rendering in the English language of both the Old and the New Testaments. The translator began his work with the book of Revelation, later turning his attention to the Gospels, and eventually, by about the year 1380, he had completed his rendering of the New Testament. It is now generally conceded, however, that the Old Testament, which was soon added, was not altogether the work of Wycliffe himself, but rather of one of his friends, a certain Nicholas de Hereford, though as Nicholas was exiled by his ecclesiastical opponents before he had finished the task he had set himself, Wycliffe completed it, thereafter arranging for the publication of the whole volume.

Despite the significant position which it rightly holds in the history of the English Bible, it should be remembered that this Wycliffite translation was not made direct from the original Hebrew or Greek manuscripts, but was simply a rendering of the Latin Vulgate, and so was in reality no more than a translation of a translation. Moreover, in a number of instances, Wycliffe's renderings of the Latin were so exactly literal that the sense of the passage in English was obscured. Thus it came about that

some two years after Wycliffe's passing, a certain John Purvey undertook to revise the translation, noting in his preface that it was his purpose to make each "sentence as trewe and open in English as it is in Latyn." In spite of Purvey's modest description of himself as "a symple creature" his revision was both skillful and scholarly, and as a result what is sometimes called the Wycliffe-Purvey Version attained considerable fame and as wide a circulation as was practicable—bearing in mind the fact that it was perforce published in manuscript form since the art of printing was at that time unknown.

Not a few of the phrases introduced for the first time in the Wycliffe-Purvey Bible are still found in our Authorized and Revised Versions—for instance: "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25: 21) and "The strait gate" (Matt. 7: 13). In the nature of the case, it is not to be wondered at that Wycliffe's rendering had its limitations, yet Dr. Robinson contends that "as a whole" it "did more than any other one thing to create and unify the English language" (*Where Did We Get Our Bible?*, page 130).

WILLIAM TYNDALE AND HIS BIBLE

William Tyndale was born in Gloucestershire towards the close of the fifteenth century, and entering Oxford University at an early age, he became an apt student of languages, and especially of the Scriptures. On graduating

from Oxford, he proceeded to Cambridge, where he continued his studies in Latin, Hebrew and Greek, which were later to prove of such inestimable value in his chosen career, and where he seems to have made the acquaintance of Erasmus, one of the most famous Greek scholars of the day and an instructor at Cambridge at this period. The deep appreciation shown by the youthful Tyndale for Erasmus' noteworthy edition of the Greek New Testament, which had but recently been published, soon gave place to a deeper interest in the book itself and an earnest desire to provide its truths in a form which could be read not only by scholars like himself and his friend, but by any of his fellow countrymen. There was a further consideration which urged Tyndale on to the work of Biblical translation. His contact with many of the clergy of the day had convinced him of their abysmal ignorance of the Bible, and in the midst of a discussion with one of them, we find him making this memorable prediction: "If God spare my life, ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than thou dost!" This was more than a mere idle boast, for before long Tyndale was to dedicate his life to its fulfillment.

In seeking a patron who would lend him support in the prosecution of this noble enterprise, he turned hopefully to Cuthbert Tunstall, then Bishop of London, but he met with scant encouragement in that quarter, being given to understand that there was "no rowme in the Bishops house for hym to translate the New Testament"

(Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* . . . , 1583). Convinced by this rebuff that he could expect little aid from the clergy of the day, he appealed to one Humphrey Munmouth, a London merchant and alderman, who readily provided not only encouragement, but also the necessary funds for the commencement of his task. Thus it appears to have been while he was lodging at Munmouth's home that Tyndale began his translation of the New Testament.

Before many months had passed, however, the active and growing opposition of his enemies convinced Tyndale that he could not find within the borders of his native England the retirement necessary if he were to bring his great work to a successful conclusion. So it came about that in the year 1524 we find him a voluntary exile at Hamburg. There his translation proceeded apace, and the following year he appeared at Cologne, studying the proof-sheets of his rendering of the New Testament, which he had now completed. Success had almost crowned his efforts; but his foes had gained word of his plans and were on the point of destroying his precious documents when he fled with them to Worms, where, early in 1526, he published the first complete New Testament to be printed in English.

In view of the intolerant attitude of the leaders of the English church at this time, we cannot wonder that this translation was banned in England, yet it found its way there copy by copy, carefully concealed from prying eyes in bales of cloth, cases of merchandise, and even in sacks of flour; and before long it was being eagerly read—some

actively defending it, others violently denouncing it as a heretical rendering. By order of the ecclesiastical authorities, many copies were seized and destroyed, but still the book continued to come in from the continent. The tide of enlightenment could not be held back, and slowly but steadily Tyndale's work gained a sure place in the homes and in the hearts of the people of England.

Though Tyndale had already accomplished much, he still longed to translate the Old Testament from its original Hebrew, and he succeeded in publishing his rendering of the Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy) and of the book of Jonah, and in bringing out a revised edition of these and of the New Testament before the spring of 1535. Then it was that his foes, stung by his success and their failure, resorted to a treacherous scheme by which he was enticed from the town in which he had taken refuge, and in May of that year he found himself a prisoner in the castle of Vilvorde near Brussels. There for sixteen long months he endured the utmost privation; but his spirit remained strong within him, for he went quietly on with his work and succeeded in translating the books from Joshua to Second Chronicles.

At length, on October 6th, 1536, he paid for his convictions the stern penalty of martyrdom. Yet his last words were not those of terror, nor of recrimination—rather they were in effect a prayer for the fulfillment of that great work which lay so close to his heart: "Lord, open the king of England's eyes!"—a prayer, moreover, which was answered

the following year in the royal acceptance of the Coverdale and Matthew Bibles (see pages 88-90, 93f.) which owed so much to the labors of Tyndale.

While he was not the first to see the need of a Bible in English, nor the first to set about filling that need, it is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of William Tyndale's work. As we have seen (page 82), Wycliffe's pioneer rendering, being based on the Latin Vulgate, was a "translation of a translation"; but Tyndale was the first to translate into English the whole of the New Testament and a considerable portion of the Old direct from the Greek and Hebrew originals, while his scholarship and fine sense of English style provided a standard for later revisers and translators. None will question his steadfastness of purpose and his devotion to duty in the face of all but insuperable obstacles, while it is equally evident that it was his earnest and sincere desire to make the Bible the book of the people. This desire began to bear fruit even during his own lifetime, while ever since his day the work of Bible translation and distribution has gone steadily forward. Moreover, it may justly be affirmed that we owe much of the literary charm of our familiar Authorized Version to the fine work of William Tyndale, who has been well named "the apostle of England," and also "the true father of our present English Bible."

COVERDALE'S BIBLE

It was during Tyndale's lifetime that Miles Coverdale undertook to bring to completion the task of translation which his great precursor had been unable to finish. Of Coverdale's background we possess little knowledge beyond the fact that he was definitely in sympathy with the reform movement, so much so, indeed, that like Tyndale himself he was forced to spend a considerable part of his life in exile on the continent of Europe. On the fourth of October, 1535, almost exactly a year before Tyndale's martyrdom, Coverdale published in Zurich (or possibly, in Antwerp) a small folio volume, measuring 11¾ by 8 inches, which is of special interest and importance, for it was the first printed edition of the complete Bible in English ever to be issued. In the preparation of this version, Coverdale followed rather closely that portion of the Scriptures which had already appeared in print under Tyndale's name, but he did not apparently have access to the translation of the books from Joshua to Second Chronicles made by Tyndale during his imprisonment; thus for that part of the Old Testament from Joshua to Malachi (excepting the prophecy of Jonah), Coverdale had perforce to provide his own translation.

Now, unlike Tyndale, Coverdale possessed little, if any, acquaintance with Hebrew, or even with Greek, and he tells us frankly that in preparing his rendering, he made free use of certain "Latyn" and "Douche" (i.e. German)

versions; while in his dedication to the complete Bible he writes that he has "with a clear conscience purely and faithfully translated the whole" with the aid of "five sundry interpreters." These "interpreters" he does not specify by name, but they are generally supposed to include the Latin Vulgate, a Latin Version by one Pagninus, Luther's famous German rendering, and the "Zurich Bible" prepared by the noted reformer Zwingli—in addition, of course, to Tyndale's work.

From Coverdale's preface to his version, we gather that he lacked in some degree that burning desire to translate the Scriptures which was so characteristic of his immediate predecessor Tyndale, and when at length he yielded to the insistence of his friends, we find him modestly affirming that "though I could not do so well as I would, I thought it yet my duty to do my best and that with a good will." Having thus, somewhat diffidently, undertaken this important task, Coverdale performed it with considerable success. What was lacking in his knowledge of Hebrew and Greek was compensated for in no small degree by the gift of an excellent English style, which may be said to have in some cases combined beauty with a certain piquant quaintness of expression; and rightful praise has been accorded to his "instinct of discrimination which is scarcely less precious than originality" (Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, page 165). Those who prepared our Authorized Version wisely chose again and again the apt and melodious renderings of Coverdale, and the familiar, "Seek

ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Isa. 55: 6) is one of many verses taken almost word for word from his translation, which also appears to have suggested the rendering: "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (Ps. 73: 26).

So far from being banned by Church and State as was Tyndale's version, at least one edition (1537) of Coverdale's Bible bore on its title page the words "sett forth with the Kynges most gracious license."

CHAPTER SEVEN

From Coverdale to the King James Version

CHAPTER SEVEN

"MATTHEW'S BIBLE" AND THE "GREAT BIBLE"

After the martyrdom of Tyndale, a certain John Rogers fell heir to his manuscript translation of the books from Joshua to Second Chronicles, and it was he who published what is known as "Matthew's Bible." The identity of the "Thomas Matthew" whose name appears on the title page has not been determined with certainty. Some consider that "Thomas Matthew" was simply a pseudonym for John Rogers, who hesitated to court the fate which had befallen his friend Tyndale by openly associating himself with a translation of the Bible; but it seems more probable that it was the name of some wealthy patron who financed the undertaking. As a translation, Matthew's Bible can lay little claim to originality, as it closely followed Tyndale's rendering of the New Testament—and of such parts of the Old as he had been enabled to complete (Genesis to Second Chronicles and the book of Jonah); while the remainder of the Old Testament was virtually reprinted from Coverdale's edition. The special interest of Matthew's Bible lies in the fact that it is reputed to be

the first English version authorized by the Crown, having, it would seem, appeared a few weeks before the 1537 edition of Coverdale's Bible, which was similarly honored. While taking steps to procure this authorization from Henry VIII, and pleading for the official circulation of the volume, Archbishop Cranmer affirmed, with quaint exaggeration, that in his opinion no better translation would be forthcoming "till a day after Doomsday!" So at the instance of Cranmer, and of that influential statesman Thomas Cromwell, King Henry gave his approval to a Bible, some two-thirds of which represented the work of William Tyndale, in whose martyrdom as a heretic he had concurred only a few months previously. Matthew's Bible was also noteworthy for its presentation in a combined form of the work of both Tyndale and Coverdale, but it was little more than a transitional version, and two years later, in April 1539, it was followed by the "Great Bible" which soon superseded it.

True, the immediate reason for this title is to be sought in the size of the book, for it formed an unusually large folio volume, but this in no way minimizes the real importance of the work itself, for by King Henry's express command a copy of "the whole Bible, *in the largest volume,* in Englyshe" was to be placed for public consultation in each of the parish churches of his realm. Though the decree was not universally observed, still the Great Bible was widely studied, not only by the clergy, but also by the laity, for "everybody that could bought the book, or busily read

it, or got others to read it to them" (Strype, *Life of Cranmer*). In its essence, the Great Bible was a revision of Matthew's Bible—a revision which had been entrusted to that same Miles Coverdale who had already performed yeoman service in the field of Biblical translation (see pages 88-90) and who now examined and corrected the "Matthew" renderings on the basis of the Vulgate and other Latin translations, comparing them with the Hebrew and Greek texts wherever possible. Both Matthew's Bible and the Great Bible stand in the direct line of descent which came through the Wycliffe, Tyndale and Coverdale translations, and led ultimately to our Authorized, and Revised Standard Versions; indeed, to this very day, the Psalter, as found in the Book of Common Prayer used by the Church of England, conforms to the rendering of the Great Bible, in preference to that of the familiar King James Version.

TAVERNER'S BIBLE AND THE "BREECHES BIBLE"

Despite the importance of Coverdale's and Matthew's Bibles, and other early sixteenth century renderings of the Scriptures into English, it soon became evident that they were capable of improvement, and among those who undertook this task was one Richard Taverner. His chief qualifications for the work seem to have been that he possessed a due sense of the importance of his undertaking and that he was a deep student of Greek, though his knowl-

edge of Hebrew was somewhat scanty. It has been said of Taverner's rendering that his "scholarship appears on every page in many minute touches," but, on the whole, his revision which appeared in the year 1539 is of secondary importance, though providing another stage in the development of our English Bible.

Of far wider interest, and of more outstanding merit, is the famous Genevan Version, commonly known as the "Breeches Bible" from its quaint statement in Genesis 3: 7 that Adam and Eve "sewed figge tree leaves together and made themselves brechis" (A. V.: "aprons"). During the reign of Queen Mary I of England, who was strongly opposed to the progress of the Reformation in her realm, many of the reformers were driven into exile and settled at Geneva, where, under the energetic leadership of John Knox, they were free to develop their doctrines and to practice their principles. Another of the group was a certain William Whittingham who had married John Calvin's sister, and who succeeded Knox as pastor of the British congregation in Geneva. Whittingham had long been interested in Biblical translation, and in the year 1557 he published a scholarly rendering of the New Testament—a rendering which formed the nucleus of the Genevan Version and which is also noteworthy for the fact that for the first time in an English Testament there were not only chapter divisions but also numbered verses, while words inserted in English to complete the sense of the original Greek appeared in italics as they later did in the King James

Version. In 1560 there appeared the complete Genevan, or "Breeches," Bible, which continued the task of New Testament revision which Whittingham had taken up, besides providing a new edition of the Old Testament, including, among other happy renderings, the familiar words: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Eccles. 12: 1).

The "Breeches Bible" is supposed to have resulted from the combined labors of several of the Genevan exiles, but while Knox, Calvin, Miles Coverdale and others may well have had a part in it, there seems little doubt that the guiding spirit of the enterprise was Whittingham himself, ably assisted by two brother Englishmen: Thomas Sampson of Chichester, and Anthony Gilby of Cambridge. This Genevan Version represented an attempt not only to publish a new and better rendering of the Bible, but also to provide a volume more portable and less expensive than the often ponderous translations which had preceded it. The success of this endeavor may partly be judged from the fact that the "Breeches Bible" appears to have passed through no less than one hundred and sixty editions. It was well received in England, especially among the common folk, while its actual or reputed connection with John Knox aided in assuring its widespread and immediate acceptance in Scotland. Its style was both clear and effective, and since its translators provided an idiomatic but remarkably literal rendering of the Scriptures, exhibiting a higher degree of accuracy than a majority of the versions

which we have thus far examined, there was ample justification for the success with which it was attended.

THE BISHOPS' BIBLE AND THE RHEIMS-DOUAI VERSION

The widespread popularity attained by the Genevan Version, or "Breeches Bible," was a cause of deep satisfaction to the followers of John Knox, and to many of the more liberal-minded members of the Church of England. On the other hand, there was a considerable group of Anglicans who, while admitting that the Genevan Version was more accurate than the Great Bible, looked askance at it as too Calvinistic in tone. Thus it came about that at the instance of Archbishop Parker of Canterbury, arrangements were made to revise the Great Bible with a view to providing an accurate and up-to-date, while strictly orthodox, translation, which it was hoped would supersede, or at any rate rival, the version prepared at Geneva. The committee appointed by the Archbishop for this purpose in 1563 consisted of nine men, all of whom were Bishops, and it is because of this fact that the revision which they carried out and which was published five years later, in 1568, came to be popularly described as the "Bishops' Bible." The result of their labors was not altogether satisfactory, for it appears that each of the nine men worked independently of the others upon the section of the Bible which had been allotted to him, and since little attention was paid to the

careful editing of the volume as a whole, it lacked cohesion and unity of style. One rather quaint characteristic of the book is the insertion of somewhat incongruous illustrations, including an engraving of Lord Leicester in full armor, which precedes the book of Joshua, and another of Cecil, Lord Burleigh, in front of the book of Psalms. A further edition of the Bishops' Bible appeared in 1572, and in it the rendering of the New Testament shows a marked improvement in scholarship, being at the same time less dependent on the various translations which had preceded it. This edition seems to have first suggested certain familiar phrases which were later perpetuated in the Authorized Version, such as: "Less than the least of all saints" (Ephes. 3: 8) and "the middle wall of partition" (Ephes. 2: 14).

Now there were others besides Archbishop Parker who viewed with no little alarm the steady progress of the Calvinistic Genevan Version, and among these was one William Allen, an Oxford scholar who, on being exiled from his native England, had settled in France. With the cooperation of his friend Gregory Martin, who, like himself, had studied at Oxford, he produced a new rendering of the whole Bible into English, which is commonly known as the Rheims-Douai Version, because, while the New Testament was first printed at Rheims in 1582, the publication of the Old Testament was delayed through lack of funds and was eventually issued at Douai in 1609–10.

Probably the chief defect of this version is that it is a rendering based on the Latin Vulgate rather than on the

original Hebrew and Greek texts, and in many instances this strong Latin influence led the translators to select the English words because they were either identical with or closely similar to Latin terms, often used with little consideration of English usage and idiom. Thus, in John 10: 11, Christ Jesus is referred to as "the good Pastor" (Latin—*pastor*) instead of "the good shepherd"; while such a word as *superaedificati* is rendered "superedified" instead of simply "built up" (Col. 2: 7). On the other hand, this version helped to introduce such now famous Biblical or religious terms as "advent," "grace," and "evangelize". Both its merits and demerits are nowhere better summarized than in the searching judgment of Dr. Moulton to the effect that: "There is no other English version of the Scriptures that will prove more instructive to the student, who will take the pains to separate what is good and useful from what is ill-advised and wrong." (Quoted in Edgar's *Bibles of England,* page 277.)

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Authorized or King James Version

CHAPTER EIGHT

KING JAMES AND THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

SINCE the Bible so widely used in homes and churches to this day is often called the "King James Version," it is of interest to discover the exact nature of the relation between that monarch and the translation associated with his name. Of course, King James was not himself the translator of this version; that task, as will afterwards appear, having been assigned to a large committee of scholars. Nevertheless a fact which is seldom realized is that not only was James I an ardent student of the Scriptures, but he had also once produced a paraphrase of the book of Revelation, besides translating certain sections of the Psalter. Thus he was one who might well have been expected to favor the great enterprise which culminated in the publication of the Authorized Version. This rendering, however, as Dr. Hoare points out, "had its origin in something very like an accident" (*Evolution of the English Bible*, page 241). In January, 1604, less than a year after his accession, James called a large conference to meet with him at Hampton Court, not, it may be observed, for

the purpose of launching, or even discussing, any new translation of the Bible, but simply to consider what is known as the "Millenary Petition"—a document presented by the Puritan party within the Church of England, which requested certain changes in the Prayer Book and pleaded for a higher standard of education among the clergy of the day. As the conference proceeded, it became increasingly apparent to the Puritans that scant attention was being paid to their plans for the revision of the Prayer Book, and, as a last resort, they affirmed that the Bible translation on which it was based was most unsatisfactory. As the Preface to the Authorized Version puts it: "When by force of reason they [the Puritans] were put from all other grounds, they had recourse at the last, to this shift, that they could not with good conscience subscribe to the Communion booke [i.e. the Prayer Book], since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated, which was as they said, a most corrupted translation." The seed so lightly sown immediately took root in the king's thought. Affirming that he had "never yet seen a Bible well translated into English," he forthwith expressed his desire that steps should be taken for the production of a new translation or revision, which was to be prepared by the most learned academic scholars of the day and revised by the leaders of the church. James also felt that it should later be presented to the Privy Council and eventually ratified by himself. Thus it was that King James definitely suggested the preparation of the version so often associated with his name, and

it was not long before this great enterprise was fully underway.

The resultant rendering, which appeared in 1611, is widely known as the "Authorized Version," a title which appears to be based upon the words of its title page to the effect that it was "Appointed to be read in Churches." The source of this "appointment," however, remains somewhat of a mystery, for, strangely enough, scholars agree in affirming that there is no direct evidence to show that it was ever formally and publicly "Authorized," whether by the king or by the Privy Council, by Parliament, or by Convocation. This, however, in no way detracts from the value of this epochal rendering, for it may justly be said to have derived its authority from its inherent excellence.

THE SOURCES OF THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

In view of the widespread and well-deserved popularity of the Authorized or King James Version of the Bible, it is but natural that one should inquire as to the background of this rendering, and, in particular, as to the nature of the sources and authorities which were studied or appealed to by those who prepared it.

Now, while we are accustomed to think and to speak of it as a "translation," it might more properly be described as a "revision." It is, in point of fact, the most generally accepted of a long series of such revisions. In the interesting Preface to their rendering, the revisers themselves stress

this point: "We never thought from the beginning," they wrote, "that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one . . . but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one . . . that hath been our endeavour." It was then in this spirit that they approached their task, carefully consulting and constantly retaining the renderings suggested by those great men who had preceded them. The first article of a code of rules which was drawn up for their guidance on entering upon this monumental work stated that the immediate basis of the revision was to be the so-called Bishops' Bible which, it will be recalled, had been first published in 1568, some thirty-six years before the King James revisers commenced their undertaking (see page 98). Then, too, they referred to the Genevan Version, the Great Bible, and Matthew's Bible, while the work of such outstanding early translators as Wycliffe, Tyndale and Coverdale was also given most careful consideration. Moreover the revisers themselves inform us that in addition they examined and compared versions and even commentaries in other languages than English, including "Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek . . . Latin . . . Spanish, French, Italian or Dutch."

As might be expected, their work was by no means confined to the consideration of versions and translations, for they went back to and carefully studied such manuscripts and printed texts of the Hebrew and Greek originals as they were able to obtain. "If you ask what they had before

them, truly it was the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the Greek of the New" (Preface to the Authorized Version). When, however, we inquire more specifically as to the nature or age of the manuscripts which they had at their disposal, we find that what are today regarded as the most ancient and important codices—particularly of the New Testament—were not then available. For example—as suggested in Chapter III—the fourth century Sinaitic Manuscript was not discovered until as late as 1859; the equally early Vatican Codex, though it had been lying in the papal archives at Rome since the end of the fifteenth century, was not really available to scholars until 1809 or later; while the fifth century Alexandrian Manuscript reached England some years after the completion and publication of the Authorized Version. In short, those who prepared this version had in the main to confine their attention to manuscripts and texts of a later date. Yet, despite this seeming handicap, the committee appointed by King James succeeded in producing a rendering which is on the whole remarkably up to date, even when considered in the light of the many important discoveries of the almost three hundred and fifty years which have passed since its publication, and it is still beloved by millions of readers.

THE TRANSLATORS OF THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

From the title page of the Authorized Version we learn that it contains "The Old and New Testaments Translated

out of the Original Tongues: and with the former Translations diligently compared and revised," but we are not there informed as to who was, or were, entrusted with this important task. However, on consulting contemporary records, as well as the lengthy and informative preface to the version—which now, unfortunately, is all too seldom read—we find that the work of translation or revision was placed in the hands not of any one individual, but of a large committee of competent scholars, apparently after consultation with the university authorities at Oxford and Cambridge. One fact which augured well for the success of the enterprise was that no pains were spared to make the group a thoroughly representative one. Sound scholarship, rather than membership in any special group or religious denomination, was the dominant factor in the selection of the men who undertook this important duty. Thus, on examining the roster of those who were named by King James, we find Anglicans and Puritans, clergy and laymen, theologians and classical scholars, who seem to have worked together with a remarkable degree of harmony and unanimity. It is recorded, moreover, that those who were appointed were scholars of proved ability, men who "came, or were thought to come . . . learned, not to learn" (Preface to the Authorized Version).

Strangely enough, there is still some uncertainty as to the exact number of men who carried out the work. While the king wrote in a letter to Bishop Bancroft that he had appointed "certain learned men, to the number of four and

fifty, for the translating of the Bible," for some unexplained reason only forty-seven names appear on the lists which have come down to us. The translators were divided into six companies or groups, two of which met at Oxford, two at Cambridge, and two at Westminster. To each group was assigned one particular portion of the Bible. For example: At Oxford the Old Testament group undertook to translate the books from Isaiah to Malachi; while the New Testament section there was entrusted with the rendering of the four Gospels, as well as the book of Acts and the book of Revelation. Then, within each group, the procedure was for "every particular man . . . to take the same chapter or chapters; and having translated or amended them severally by himself . . . all to meet together, confer what they have done, and agree for their parts what shall stand." As soon as a book was completed in this manner, a copy of the revision was to be sent to each of the remaining five groups for their consideration, and any suggestions which they might offer were submitted to the group which had carried out the revision. The decision of any disputed point and the final editing of the whole work were placed in the hands of a committee of six, consisting of one leading member from each of the six companies.

From even this brief consideration of the procedure followed in the preparation of the King James Version, it will be evident how much time and care were expended on the rendering, in an effort to make it endure—as it has already endured—for centuries.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

To this day, almost three and a half centuries after the year when the Authorized Version first appeared, its prestige remains as firm as ever. True, there are more recent fine versions—to be discussed later—which embody the results of modern scholarship and research and are phrased in more modern English, but still the rendering brought out by the King James translators continues to be read in countless Protestant homes and churches. In view of this situation, it is natural that one should consider some of the reasons for this great and deserved popularity.

Without doubt one of the outstanding merits of the rendering is the purity of its English style, which perpetuates the highest qualities of the Golden Age of English literature, without stooping to the discursive pedantry or the florid phrases characteristic of some of the Elizabethan and Jacobean authors. "We need waste no words in praise of the Authorized Version," writes Dr. Hoare; "it is universally accepted as a literary masterpiece, as the noblest and most beautiful book in the world" (*Evolution of the English Bible,* page 241). "In point of sheer literary excellence," writes the same authority, "it is indeed hardly conceivable that the Bible of 1611 will ever be surpassed" (Ibid. page 257). The influence of its style has been as far-reaching as it has been potent; and quotations and turns of expression from the Authorized Version are constantly to be found in our contemporary literature. The very fact that

those who prepared this version made it plain that the work was by no means completely new provides another reason for its success. Despite the fact that they themselves were scholars of high standing, they did not fail to examine the renderings provided by those who had gone before, and they constantly adopted such renderings. Thus the resultant version may fairly be said to retain the best qualities of the many translations which preceded it and which went far towards making it possible, while at the same time it provides many new and excellent renderings suggested by those who prepared it.

Earlier Bible translations were almost invariably the result of individual effort, put forth by such men as Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale and others, and while such effort along this, as along any line of endeavor, is of high importance, it is also true that much can be gained through the wholehearted cooperation and discussion of carefully selected scholars such as those who were responsible for the King James Version. Such cooperation makes for stability, which is surely evidenced in the case of this translation by its unique position after centuries of use.

Then, too, there were additional factors which favored the translators of the Authorized Version, and which went far towards ensuring the permanence of their undertaking. Other translators had been forced to toil in secret, encountering opposition on every side, but those responsible for the King James Version carried on their work with the support and under the authority of both Church and State.

No fear of persecution hindered the orderly development of their important task. Theirs was a national undertaking, and as such it received national support—the more so, no doubt, because, as one writer has expressed it, "the main interest of King James's age was . . . predominantly theological."

Thus the peculiar circumstances of the background of this famous version, and of its preparation, united in assuring both its importance and its ready acceptance, while it has been well said that "it lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells."

CHAPTER NINE

The Revised Version and Other Modern Renderings Prior to 1940

CHAPTER NINE

THE REVISED VERSION

Despite the unique importance and widespread popularity of the Authorized Version, there gradually arose a cry for its revision, and in considering the reasons for this cry, it may be recalled that the King James translation itself was not strictly speaking a new rendering, but rather the best of a long series of revisions. Those who prepared it did not profess to have ended forever this task of revision, for in their preface they modestly affirm, "We have at the length . . . brought the work to that pass that you see."

Those who were eventually appointed to undertake such a further revision were deeply sensible on their part of the merits of the King James rendering, for they express their admiration for "its simplicity, its dignity, its power, its happy turns of expression, its general accuracy . . . the music of its cadences, and the felicities of its rhythm" (Preface to the Revised Version of the New Testament). Nevertheless, it is true that since 1611 there have been changes and development in the English language. Many

words which were then readily understandable are now archaic or even obsolete. Then, too, in the past three centuries many important manuscripts have been discovered and there has been a more specialized study of the grammar, syntax and idiom of the Bible languages.

Such reasons as these prompted the decision made by an assembled group of leaders of the Church of England, in the year 1870, to the effect that a committee of its own members should be appointed to undertake the work of revision in collaboration with other scholars whom they might select without consideration of nationality or of creed. No fewer than ninety-nine outstanding men of letters, of whom thirty-four were Americans, took part in this revision; while of the sixty-five British members, forty-one belonged to the Church of England, the remainder being from other denominations. Thus while the Authorized Version was in effect a National Bible, the Revised Version was International in its scope.

The rules adopted to guide the preparation of this revision called for a minimum of change in the Authorized Version, consistent with faithfulness to the original. The general style of its language was to be retained. There was to be a preliminary revision of each portion of the Bible, followed by a second and final one at which suggested changes must receive the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present. Much time and care were expended on the work, the revision of the New Testament continuing

for some ten and a half years, and that of the Old for no less than fifteen.

High hopes were entertained for the wide acceptance of the rendering, but in the three-quarters of a century since its appearance, it has not attained to the popularity anticipated by those who arranged for its preparation. It is said to contain in the New Testament alone some 36,000 changes from the text of the Authorized Version, many of which "have done much to elucidate the Scriptures to English readers" as Edgar expresses it (*Bibles of England,* page 383); but it has also been observed that there are not a few of these changes which appear to be trivial or even arbitrary rather than essential. "Time has shown," comments Dr. Robinson, when discussing this Revised Version, "that its improved grammatical accuracy is not a sufficient compensation for the music of the old cadences, which in so many cases has been sacrificed for some trifling point in syntax!" (*Where Did We Get Our Bible?* page 175).

THE AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

While the Revised Version of the Bible was prepared by a large group of thoroughly competent scholars, their insight and scholarship were often obscured or limited by a policy of conservatism, partly self-imposed by the group and partly required by the Anglican Council which sponsored the rendering. Laudable though such caution was, up to a point, as obviating any extreme or unwarranted

changes, it meant on the other hand that certain changes, however justifiable, could not be made simply because of their novelty. As the work of revision proceeded, this fact became increasingly apparent to the American members of the committee who constituted about one-third of the whole; and it was eventually agreed that the renderings which they preferred, but which did not receive the two-thirds vote necessary to assure their adoption, should be placed in an appendix.

It had been agreed that for fourteen years the American group should not publish or sponsor any revision other than that finally brought out in 1885, but in the year 1899, when the agreement came to an end, the American group, which had not disbanded, but had been continuing with the labor of study and of revision during the intervening period, decided to publish an edition of the Revised Version in which they incorporated in the text their suggestions as appended to the English Revised Version—suggestions which had received favorable comment and often ready acceptance in both Great Britain and America. They also made further often valuable changes as a result of their long study of the subject. This translation, commonly called the American Standard Version or the American Revised Version, appeared in 1901, and its reception was more encouraging than that accorded to the Revised Version in its original form, for it may be said to have carried on and brought to completion the translation begun under

the sponsorship of the Church of England in 1870, while at the same time correcting it in a number of instances.

It is instructive to note a few of the changes introduced in this edition. For instance, it uniformly substitutes the name "Holy Spirit" for "Holy Ghost," thus providing not only a strictly literal translation, but also obviating any possible misconception of the word "ghost," which in modern times has come to mean "specter"; while such a passage as Isaiah 11: 5 becomes more readily understandable when we find in the American Revision, "faithfulness the girdle of his 'loins'" (instead of the ambiguous and archaic term "reins"). Then the opening words of Paul's speech at Athens provide an example of an individual New Testament passage in which the meaning of the original is clarified in the American Standard Version. According to the Authorized and English Revised renderings, the apostle commenced his address in a manner which would be apt to antagonize those whom he wished to attract, describing them as "too superstitious" or "very superstitious," whereas the usage of the Greek word bears out the natural assumption that Paul would begin by praising the merits rather than by condemning the errors of the earlier belief. Thus, according to the American Standard Version, the apostle commended his audience as being "very religious," bearing in mind the numbers of altars, temples and statues which he had seen near by (Acts 17: 22f.).

All in all, the American Standard Version is well deserv-

ing of praise, for, while retaining the good points of the Revised Version, it includes a number of distinct improvements and is generally conceded to be more accurate, more idiomatic, and more up to date than the English edition of the Revised Bible.

OTHER MODERN VERSIONS PRIOR TO 1940

As distinct from the Revised Version and the American Standard Version of the Bible, which are admittedly revisions of the familiar Authorized Version, there have since appeared other translations whose background is somewhat different. Those who prepared them make no particular effort to adhere to the phraseology of the King James rendering, or to revise it. Their aim is rather to free themselves from presuppositions in the matter of translation and to go direct to the Hebrew and Greek texts, as these texts have been preserved, studied, and to some extent reconstructed in the light of modern research.

Those who are inclined to be startled by colloquial or semi-colloquial renderings of the New Testament, might well recall that, as we have seen (pages 29ff.), the New Testament was originally written in colloquial, not classical, Greek—that is, it was set down in the vernacular of the day, and this in itself is one of the most telling arguments in favor of modern vernacular versions of the Bible. The position of the Biblical translators of our day, as expressed by one of themselves, is that "a translation

to be fully grasped must be in the idiom of current speech" (Leroy Waterman, *Journal of Bible and Religion,* July-September, 1937), while such translators have the benefit of much new light which has been cast upon the Scriptures as the result of recent discoveries. Speaking of the period from 1900 to 1937, Dr. Waterman contends that in it "roughly one may say that . . . we have advanced about two hundred years nearer to the original Scriptures" (ibid.)

One of the earliest of the better known "modern" versions, the Twentieth Century New Testament (1898-1901), was followed in 1903 by Dr. Weymouth's fine rendering of the New Testament, which gives a dignified translation of the Greek into the idiom of our day. The fifth edition of this rendering, ably revised by Dr. J. A. Robertson on the basis of linguistic and other discoveries made after Weymouth passed on, appeared in 1930.

Among the work of Biblical translators in the early part of the twentieth century, that of Dr. James Moffatt is particularly outstanding, in that as an expert in both Hebrew and Greek he has provided us with a fresh but scholarly rendering of the whole Bible—a rendering which has met with wide and well-deserved acceptance on both sides of the Atlantic. Dr. Moffatt's New Testament was first published in 1913, and the Old in 1924, while the two now generally appear in one volume, which the late Dr. S. Parkes Cadman once described as "entitled to an honored and necessary place in the library of every man."

Another modern rendering which likewise merits close attention and study is characterized as "The Bible: An American Translation." This version appeared in 1931, the Old Testament being translated by a group of scholars under the editorship of Dr. J. M. P. Smith, while Professor Edgar J. Goodspeed is responsible for the New Testament. Evaluating this American translation, Prof. Beatrice Brooks referred to it as "great literature" while she also noted its faithfulness to the original texts (see *Journal of Bible and Religion,* January-March, 1937). Among its many interesting contributions, one of the most thought provoking is that which offers the rendering, "Blessed are those who feel their spiritual need," in place of the familiar "Blessed are the poor in spirit" of the King James Version (Matt. 5: 3).

These, of course, are but a few of the better-known modern translations which appeared in the period up to 1940.

No one English rendering of the Bible, be it old or new, has attained to perfection, but all those who have taken part and still take part in this ever fascinating and important work of translation, have contributed something towards the great task of providing the ageless messages of our Bible in a form which should be understandable by all.

CHAPTER TEN

The Revised Standard Version

CHAPTER TEN

THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION

During the past two decades, from approximately 1940 to 1960, Biblical study and Biblical translation alike have continued apace, and this period has been noteworthy both for new discoveries and even deeper research which augur well for a more comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the Book of Books in its original meaning.

To the casual observer, or even to the consistent reader of the Scriptures, it might perhaps appear that the constantly increasing distance from the time when that monumental library of books was first assembled would make it ever more difficult to establish the real message which they were designed to bring forth so many centuries ago. Actually, the very reverse is the case. For one thing, the modern specialist in the Bible and its languages, and particularly in the study of such manuscripts as have been preserved from early times, has readily available to him scientific aids and techniques largely unknown at the turn of the century or even later.

Today, for example, the use of microfilm is widely accepted in both business and the professions, and through its use the translator of the Bible can examine in detail early manuscripts and records of various kinds which had previously been all but inaccessible because of their preservation in obscure or distant libraries, such as that to be found in the famed Monastery of St. Catherine on the slopes of Mount Sinai. Then, too, the dating of ancient materials by means of the radiocarbon method can often either establish or refute the antiquity of a manuscript by determining the relative age of the linen or other fabric in which it had been carefully wrapped for safekeeping. Moreover, careful analysis, by modern methods, of the inks used in the transcription of such manuscripts also plays its part in indicating the age of the parchment or papyrus under consideration, and in suggesting the country and sometimes even the district in which it was prepared.

In addition to these and many other recently developed methods of research, there has been and continues to be an increasingly vital interest in all branches of archaeology, which is constantly retrieving remnants of vanished civilizations, many of them contemporary with some part of the period covering many hundreds of years which witnessed the emergence of those vital records which go to make up what we know as the Bible.

Many of these archaeological finds provide background material casting light upon how the patriarchs and

prophets, and later Christ Jesus and his close followers, lived and worked, thus helping to clarify the context of many of their teachings and illustrations. Recently unearthed carvings and inscriptions dating from the Biblical period often contribute even more directly to a correct understanding of passages in the Bible manuscripts which had long remained somewhat cryptic even to those who through the years have earnestly sought to interpret their significance.

These examples should be sufficient at this point to suggest to the reader some of the many aids readily available to the scholars of our own day who are engaged in the truly fascinating fields of Biblical translation and research.

These last two decades have witnessed many achievements along these lines, of which two are of major interest and importance, appealing as they do to the specialist and layman alike—although, as might be expected, for somewhat different reasons. These achievements are the preparation (which culminated during this period) and publication of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible —familiarly described as the RSV Bible—and the discovery and interpretation of what have come to be known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The general reader readily accepts the clarity and enlightenment provided by the latest revision of the Scriptures in English, while the Biblical technician not only appreciates the accuracy and felicity of the renderings

provided, but also the wealth of scholarship involved.

In the case of the Scrolls—to be discussed in the next chapter—the romance of the discovery of the first of these by a roving shepherd lad, after roughly two thousand years, has a universal appeal, while the student is more fully aware of the startling impact of these ancient documents upon almost all types of Biblical study, including that of translation.

The following brief discussion and evaluation of the Revised Standard Version is not intended as a defense of this great work, which does not need, even if the present writer could supply, such support. Rather it is intended here to indicate something of its distinctive position as compared with other revisions and translations of the Bible and to suggest why within a few years' time it has won for itself a popularity—shown by a present circulation (1960) of over seven million copies—second only to that of the familiar and justly beloved rendering of the King James translators, its senior by almost three and a half centuries.

The Revised Standard Version, as its name implies, is quite frankly a revision, as, for that matter, was the famous version of 1611, which went back to Tyndale and retained many of the fine renderings which he established. As we have seen, the English Revised Version of 1881-85 dared to be the first to undertake a direct revision of the King James Bible with a view to clarifying many of its renderings, while the American Standard

Version of 1901 carried this task further and with greater success. Nevertheless, the improvements in meaning provided by both these renderings were all too often offset by a literalness of style which militated against the widespread acceptance of these revisions; and it became evident to many discerning scholars that there was still room for a more definitive revision, designed both to avoid the pitfalls encountered by those immediately preceding it and to retain wherever possible the dignified and beautiful style of the King James translators, while modifying their wording where necessary in the interests of accuracy and reflecting the new light thrown on the Scriptures by recent discoveries and advances in Biblical scholarship.

Thus it came about that in 1929 the International Council of Religious Education, which had recently acquired the copyright of the American Standard Version, appointed a committee of fifteen scholars to make a careful study of its text, with a view to determining the importance and advisability of making a further revision. After considering all sides of the question for several years, the members of the committee reached the conclusion that such a revision was indeed necessary, and they proceeded to formulate a plan which outlined both the nature and the extent of this task as they conceived it. These preliminary studies formed an essential basis for the actual work of revision which was formally authorized by the Council in 1937. Those who were called

upon to undertake it represented a wide cross section of the best Biblical authorities in the United States and Canada; and in the end, no fewer than ninety-one scholars, drawn from almost all Protestant denominations in these countries, cooperated in bringing the work to a successful conclusion. In 1946 the revision of the New Testament was published, and in 1952 it was joined by the Old Testament to form the Revised Standard Version Bible.

The foregoing statistical paragraph gives little if any indication of the task involved, which was truly a monumental one. For one thing, remembering that proverbially it is much easier to build a new house than to remodel successfully an old and admittedly beautiful one, it is clear that the obligation laid upon the twentieth-century revisers (as upon those who had preceded them) that they should preserve whenever possible the inimitable style and diction of the King James Version, while clarifying it and bringing it up to date, presented a peculiar problem which does not face the individual translator. A James Moffatt, for example, has the advantage of owing allegiance to no other English rendering, and partly as a result of this literary freedom, his style has a freshness and vigor of its own, independent of either previous or contemporary translators. Moreover, such an individual translator is not called upon to confer with ninety other members of a committee before deciding on a single point of translation, however carefully

he may himself consider it! It says much for the patience of those who prepared the Revised Standard Version—and for their humility and cooperation—that under these conditions they were so successful in their undertaking.

True, there have been and are still some persons unprepared to admit the important contribution of the RSV to the accurate understanding of the perennial message of the Bible; but the fact that it has encountered criticism and even abuse in some quarters cannot contradict or lessen its significance. After all, Jerome's epochal work in preparing the Latin Vulgate in the fourth century of our era was strongly protested by many of his contemporaries; while for more than half a century after its publication, the now justly beloved King James Version continued to be bitterly attacked and its translators accused of blasphemy, deceit, and corruption.

In the light of these historical facts, the wide acceptance of the Revised Standard Version in the relatively few years since its presentation to the public bears witness to the remarkably successful results of the revisers' work. They themselves would certainly be among the first to disclaim any pretensions to perfection or to the setting forth of a final revelation, but numberless readers —laymen and clergymen alike—justly hail this new revision as providing welcome light for our generation, and perhaps for many generations to come, upon the age-old message of Holy Writ.

Among the many reasons which combined to justify

the preparation of the RSV, the following may be noted as of special significance. Since the early seventeenth century a very large number of Biblical manuscripts have been discovered and become available to students. Especially is this true in the case of manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, for while less than a dozen were available to the revisers of 1611, today some 4,500 are accessible to translators. Moreover, since that time there have been wide advances in directly Biblical studies and in related fields.

Admitting fully the felicity of expression so characteristic of the Authorized Version, there is no doubt that there remain many passages hard to understand, partly because the King James scholars were themselves unable to grasp the meaning of the original in these instances. In addition, there are some three hundred or more words or phrases which, although vivid, accurate and readily understandable in the seventeenth century, have so changed in meaning because of the evolution of our English language that today they are scarcely intelligible to a great number of readers. Still more serious is the fact that in many cases the meaning of certain words has been directly reversed in the past three hundred and fifty years. A familiar example is found in the use of the verb *let* for *hinder* in the Authorized Version, where today it means, of course, to *permit* or *allow.*

Equally confusing are the various references in the King James Version to *conversation,* not in the present-

day sense of *talk* or *discussion,* but in that of *manner* or *way of life,* which represents the meaning of the original Greek when so understood.

Even more puzzling, perhaps, to the reader of the Authorized Version is Paul's advice to the Corinthians (I Cor. 10: 24): "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth.*" This might well be understood as permitting or even encouraging theft, or at least covetousness. Actually, in Elizabethan English, *wealth* did not necessarily mean *money* or *supply,* but was primarily associated with the term *weal* (well-being) which adequately represents the Greek word used at this point. The thought of the apostle is well suggested by the rendering of the Revised Standard Version: "Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor."

Despite the transcendent character of the Master Christian, it was not his *virtue,* in the modern sense of the term, which brought healing to the woman afflicted with a chronic hemorrhage, so much as the *power* (Greek: *dunamis*) which he expressed, as the RSV makes plain. It may be added that in various other passages the King James translators themselves did not hesitate to give *dunamis* its regular meaning of *power.*

It has often seemed surprising to the reader of the Authorized Version that Paul should appear to advise his correspondents to give "with simplicity" (Rom. 12: 8). How much more natural—as well as more consonant with the meaning of the Greek—is the rendering favored by

the revisers to the effect that men should give "with liberality."

Many such illustrations taken from the New Testament could be added, but these should be sufficient to suggest something of the clarification provided by this new version through its use of terms readily understandable today.

In its approach to the Old Testament, as to the New, the Revised Standard Version offers numerous valuable contributions to our understanding of the Bible as presented in English. There are, for example, various Hebrew terms which have always presented a peculiar challenge to the translator. One of the most important of these is the deeply significant and widely used term חסד (*chesed*), which is generally translated *mercy* in the King James Bible and *lovingkindness* in the American Standard Version. To the thought of those who prepared the Revised Standard Version, neither rendering seemed to express the inner meaning of this remarkable term, nor did either seem to provide a suitable common denominator to suggest to the reader the intimate nuances of the word, with its basic implications of love and loyalty, of fidelity and constancy—deeper than mercy, wider and more vivid than kindness. In fact it probably must be admitted that no one English word can fully represent it.

It was only after long study and discussion—and as one of the final items on the agenda of their many meet-

ings—that the revisers settled upon the phrase *steadfast love* as perhaps coming nearest to expressing the meaning of *chesed* in a wide majority of instances. They did not consider it as necessarily being the final solution to this problem in semantics, but their selection does have the unquestioned advantage of retaining the essential constancy implied in the term, while bearing witness to the presence of the concept of *love* in the Hebrew Scriptures—a quality, or perhaps rather an essence, which is all too often reserved in the minds of many people for the New Testament writings.

Thus the Revised Standard Version does well in reminding its readers, even if only through indirection, that the Apostle John's inspired identification of God with *love* came not as a completely new discovery, but rather as a natural development from the ideals of his Hebrew ancestors—as well as being in apparent conformity with the exalted thoughts of the Master himself, as judged by his repeated emphasis upon the concept of love in all its forms.

This is in no way intended to imply that the revisers were moved by any theological bias in their translation of *chesed* as *steadfast love*. On the contrary, they sought honestly and consistently to provide the clearest rendering they could jointly discover for any given term or passage, even as did their predecessors who gave us the King James Bible.

The fact that the Authorized Version has been hailed

as "the greatest monument to English prose" bears well-deserved tribute to the beauty of its style and phrasing, but at the same time it may be taken as implying that one of the most characteristic aspects of Hebrew writing has been largely neglected—for it is now generally accepted that almost half of the Old Testament was originally written not in prose, but in poetry. Thus not only the Psalms and the Song of Solomon, but also large portions of the prophetic writings and of such books as Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes appeared in this form, while brief poems are to be found elsewhere in the Old Testament and, for that matter, also in the New.

Even the American Standard Version of 1901 prints less than 15 per cent of the Old Testament as poetry, while the Revised Standard Version sets forth some 40 per cent as poetic in form and in structure, as the Hebrew itself shows it to be. This is of great value to the general reader, enabling him readily to recognize the presence of such poetic passages and then to view their message in the light of the special characteristics of poetic expression.

Included in the task and achievement of those who prepared the RSV was the translation of the books of the Apocrypha, which, although not considered by Protestants as canonical Scripture, are of considerable historical importance, especially in their record of the Jews' heroic struggle for independence during the Maccabean period. Moreover, there is not a little—especially in such

a book as the Wisdom of Solomon—which challenges comparison with some of the finest passages to be found in our familiar Old Testament. The fact that the Septuagint, the Vulgate—and consequently the Roman Church—accept the Apocrypha as canonical and that these books are read to some extent in the services of the Church of England, further suggests their significance. It may be added that even the staunch reformer Martin Luther adjudged them "useful and good to read."

In recognition of these facts, King James' translators prepared a rendering of the Apocrypha which for many years uniformly appeared between the Old and the New Testaments in the earlier printings of the Authorized Version, although most editions now omit these books. Thus it was but natural that a revision of the Apocrypha should be made by the revisers of our own day, who have provided a notable contribution to our understanding of this significant, but all too often neglected, body of literature.

The closeness of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible to the sense of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek originals and the representation of their idioms in the language of our day, without either undue literalness or an inordinate use of paraphrase, is indeed commendable.

The RSV may justly be said to retain the tone and flavor of the familiar King James Version to a remarkable extent, while clarifying difficult passages which, although euphonious, are often scarcely understandable to the

modern reader, partly because of changes in our English idiom and usage since the earlier version appeared. What we may occasionally miss of the sheer beauty of diction which characterizes the Authorized Version, we gain in insight and in clarity of expression.

Each of these two important versions holds a valued and secure place in the long and continuing history of the translation of our ageless Bible into the languages of all mankind.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Dead Sea Scrolls

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

THAT strange body of water most commonly known as the Dead Sea lies in southern Palestine at a depth of 1286 feet below sea level, between the mountains of Moab on the east and the highlands of Judah on the west. In Biblical times it was often known as the Salt Sea or the Sea of the Plain, while by the Arabs it is still described as *Bahr Lut* (the Sea of Lot) reminding us of its association with Abraham's nephew and of the fiery destruction of the neighboring "cities of the plain" (Sodom and Gomorrah) some four thousand years ago.

In recent decades it has become the center of a thriving industry, for each year some 145,000 tons of potash, in addition to several thousand tons of other minerals, are now extracted from its waters which are heavily impregnated with mineral salts. But it may safely be affirmed that from 1947 on its most widely accepted title to fame has come from its association with the almost incredibly ancient Biblical and other manuscripts dis-

covered near its shores and therefore popularly known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Few, if any, discoveries in modern times have so captured the imagination and interest of folk in all walks of life and in countries all over the world. Not only has the appearance of these scrolls after almost two thousand years revolutionized many of the traditional conclusions of Biblical scholarship, but it also points up the intriguing possibility that other written records, dating from Christ Jesus' day or earlier, may still appear in an equally unexpected fashion to cast further new light upon the background and meaning of the Scriptures.

How and where the first of these scrolls were found is now widely known, so we may briefly pass over the romantic elements associated with their discovery. The actual date of their finding remains somewhat of a mystery, but it is generally conceded that they came to light early in the year 1947.

It seems that two shepherd lads were tending a mixed flock of sheep and goats in the wild and largely barren hills which rise from the western shore of the Dead Sea and that they were not far from the spring known as Ain Feshkha. Apparently one of the goats had separated itself from the others, and in seeking it they followed an unaccustomed path which led them to a cave hidden among the precipitous rocks. To them there was nothing unusual about such a discovery, for this section of the country is honeycombed with caves, some little more

than depressions in the side of a hill, others of considerable size and extent. One of the lads, a young man of fifteen, idly tossed a stone into the opening, perhaps in an attempt to dislodge the goat from its hiding place, and was startled by the sound of breaking pottery. Curiosity soon got the better of his fright, and he and his companion entered the small mouth of the cave to discover some large earthenware vessels of unusual shape, one of which the stone had broken. As their eyes grew more accustomed to the deep shadow after the blazing light of the Syrian sun, it became evident that the jars contained what appeared to be scrolls of parchment. They were weathered with age, in spite of the care with which they had been wrapped in linen and consigned to the carefully covered jars, which many authorities now feel to have been specially designed for the purpose.

Unwittingly the two young men had stumbled upon the first indications of what is now conceded to be the most important discovery of ancient manuscripts to be made in modern times! This, of course, they had no means of knowing, but since even their untrained eyes could readily see that the scrolls were inscribed with an unfamiliar form of writing, they sensed that here might well be objects of value which they could sell in one of the neighboring Judean market towns.

Unconsciously following the thought of other more famous shepherds who had tended their flocks in that very province almost two thousand years before—"let us now

go even unto Bethlehem" (Luke 2: 15)—they made their way to that same ancient village which lay some fifteen miles distant. In doing so they no doubt followed the immemorial track through the hills over which Naomi and Ruth had walked on their return to Bethlehem from the land of Moab in the days of the Judges. Little did the twentieth-century shepherds dream that some if not all of the scrolls they carried with them were afterwards to be proved to date from still earlier than the birth of Jesus.

At first their priceless finds were considered to have little or no importance. On the one hand, it was argued that they could not possibly be as ancient as they looked and therefore must be carefully fabricated forgeries; while on the other, it was thought that if they were relatively modern manuscripts, they were too tattered to be useful. Finally an Arab merchant in Bethlehem to whom they were shown, recognizing that they were not written in his native tongue and supposing they might have been composed in Syriac, sent them to Jerusalem, but even there they met at first with lack of interest and indeed with open skepticism.

Eventually several of the manuscripts from the original cave came into the custody of the Hebrew University and the others were purchased by the head of the Syrian Monastery of St. Mark at Jerusalem, Archbishop Athanasius Yeshue Samuel, but even he seems to have been unaware at this time of their great importance.

One of the first to glimpse their nature and value was Dr. John C. Trever, a fellowship student at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. He had the opportunity of examining one of the scrolls and recognized the archaic Hebrew script in which it was written, noting, moreover, that the portion he saw came from the book of Isaiah. Further study confirmed the fact that this scroll was one of the earliest and most important of those found in the original cave, containing as it does the complete book of Isaiah in a remarkably fine state of preservation.

Since that time numerous exhaustive and independent tests have led scholars to the conclusion that the manuscript which came to be known as the St. Mark's Isaiah Scroll—from the monastery to which it was transferred—was probably penned shortly before 100 B.C., only about half a century after the book of Daniel, considered to be the latest of the Old Testament books, was originally composed. This dating for the Isaiah scroll provides us with a manuscript of a complete Old Testament book in Hebrew, many hundreds and perhaps even a thousand years older than any which had been known prior to 1947—for, as we have seen, before that time the earliest known Hebrew manuscripts appear to have come from the tenth or possibly the ninth century A.D., with the exception of a few small fragments, such as what is known as the Nash Papyrus, which contains a few verses from

Deuteronomy and may even be contemporary with the Isaiah scroll.

Naturally the reader may ask, "What effect has the discovery of this ancient scroll, and of others of closely similar date, had upon the understanding and translation of the Old Testament so familiar to us?" In reply it may be said at once that relatively few changes are indicated in the Hebrew text as we have long had it, and such changes as there are do not involve any major variations in the message of the Old Testament books as they have come down to us. In short, the value of the Dead Sea Scrolls in connection with the text and translation of the Hebrew Scriptures is indirect rather than direct—confirming what we already have rather than disputing its validity. Obviously their function in this respect is of deep importance, while the minor variations preserved by the scrolls are, of course, of historical and linguistic interest to scholars.

One of the points which makes the St. Mark's Isaiah Scroll appeal especially to the imagination of the student of Christianity is his recollection of the Gospel account of what has sometimes been described as Christ Jesus' first sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4: 16ff.), when he read the words of the prophet Isaiah from the opening verses of chapter sixty-one of the book which bears his name, beginning: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. . . ." The manuscript of Isaiah

found near the Dead Sea was apparently in existence a century before Jesus' birth, and it was unquestionably a scroll of similar character from which he read this inspiring message in the synagogue.

While special attention has been paid to this Isaiah scroll partly because of its age, its completeness, and the association of a similar scroll with the life of Christ Jesus, it is well to bear in mind that it represents but one among a very large number of scrolls—some relatively complete, some all too fragmentary—which have come to light in recent years in the vicinity of the Dead Sea.

Even the original find in the cave near Ain Feshkha—now known as Cave I—provided, in addition to the St. Mark's Isaiah Scroll, some ten manuscripts or parts of manuscripts, forming, it appears, five separate compositions, the names of which indicate something of the broad field which they covered. They included an interesting commentary on the book of Habakkuk; a scroll apparently telling of the Biblical Lamech, mentioned in Genesis; a manuscript describing the War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness and a collection of Thanksgiving Psalms. The fifth manuscript from this cave has come to be widely known as the Manual of Discipline and might almost be described as the bylaws of the Qumran community, which will be discussed in a moment. If not perhaps as early as the Isaiah Scroll, the others are agreed to have been set down certainly no later than A.D. 70.

Since 1947, no fewer than ten additional caves have

been discovered in the same general vicinity, yielding quantities of additional manuscripts, many of them Biblical.

Naturally the question arises as to why so many scrolls should be recovered in a limited area, and the answer seems to be that they formed part of an ancient library and were dispersed among the various near-by caves for safekeeping in a time of dire emergency—in all probability due to an attack by a Roman force stationed at Jericho which is not far distant.

For many years there has been known a place some eight miles south of Jericho named Khirbet Qumran (the ruin of Qumran), which, until the discovery of the scrolls, called forth relatively slight interest among archaeologists. But, as increasingly large numbers of manuscripts came to light in that vicinity, steps were taken to excavate Qumran to see whether it might possibly provide some clue to the origin and preparation of the scrolls.

The efforts of the archaeologists were well rewarded, for careful digging revealed the foundations and part of the walls of an extensive community center, founded in pre-Christian times by a Jewish sect almost certainly to be identified with the Essenes, a semi-monastic group with which John the Baptist may possibly have been associated. Careful exploration and study of the buildings revealed, among other things, the existence of an extensive library and of another room considered to have been a *scriptorium*—a place set apart for the copy-

ing of manuscripts—with tables, stools, inkwells and other indications of its nature and use. Additional clues discovered during the excavation of Qumran were pieces of pottery which were proved to belong to jars of the same distinctive type as those in which the manuscripts found in Cave I were hidden.

The evidence, then, combines to suggest that in its day Qumran was noted for its literary studies, and it is probable that it was at the peak of its prestige during the period of the Master's life and ministry. For many years, in fact, there have been those who contended that Jesus himself had some direct contact with the Essenes. Be that as it may, and it is far from being established, he must often have passed within a few miles of Qumran during his various visits to Jericho, as well as at the time of his baptism in the River Jordan.

There seems to be little doubt that Qumran was captured and its Essene inhabitants either slain or scattered shortly before the fall of the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and that in anticipation of some such tragedy they made plans for secreting the valuable contents of their extensive library in the caves which we have been discussing.

Already upwards of five hundred manuscripts, some of them virtually complete but a far greater number tantalizingly fragmentary, have been painstakingly assembled by scholars from the caves in the general vicinity of Qumran and it is entirely possible that many more may still be recovered.

As we have seen, the original cave near Ain Feshkha yielded several almost complete scrolls and the same is true of Cave XI, but in some respects the fourth cave in order of discovery is the most significant of all. Situated at a distance of no more than two hundred yards from the great center of Qumran itself, it appears to have formed the main depository for the contents of the Qumran library when circumstances forced its abandonment.

Meticulous search and excavation in Cave IV have brought to light an incredible quantity of manuscript fragments. In fact, one of the best informed authorities on the subject estimates their number in tens of thousands. (See Frank M. Cross, Jr.: *The Ancient Library of Qumran, and Modern Biblical Studies,* page 18, etc.) These fragments are being laboriously pieced together and already have borne witness to the presence of almost four hundred scrolls in this one cave, a number of them dating from a period prior to that which produced the famed Isaiah Scroll, often considered to be the earliest manuscript found in Cave I. Notable among these very early records from Cave IV are manuscripts of Exodus and Samuel, believed to date from the third century B.C.

Some of the Qumran manuscripts are written in Hebrew, others in Greek. By no means all of them are Biblical—perhaps one in four, judging by the evidence provided by Cave IV—but all are of deep interest to the scholar and each contributes its quota to our knowledge

of the background of the Bible. Every book in the Old Testament is represented to some extent in the Qumran discoveries, with the possible exception of the book of Esther; while many portions of the Jewish Scriptures occur again and again, as, for example, the books of the Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy) which have some thirty representatives in Cave IV alone.

Fragmentary though most of the Biblical scrolls are after the vicissitudes they have undergone in the past two thousand years, it is agreed that many date from the second century B.C. They bear witness to the fact that these books were well established at that early date, and their text and content are seen to be basically the same as those of the later Old Testament manuscripts on which even our modern English translations are founded. There are, of course, numerous variations in detail, but, as we have already seen, these are not sufficient to suggest any drastic or even material changes in the familiar records of the lives and teachings of the leaders of Israel as they have come down to us.

It may be added that the Dead Sea Scrolls, to again give them their popular name, have provided, among so many objects of vital interest, a manuscript of the book of Daniel estimated to date from a time no more than fifty years after the date when that book was first written, now conceded to be 167 or 168 B.C. Here we come nearer to reaching the *autograph*—the original writing—of any Biblical book than we have ever come before.

In view of the completely unexpected finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the wealth of new knowledge about the Bible and its background which they have given and are continuing to give us, there may easily remain other treasures of a similar character awaiting discovery in the Bible lands. It is even within the bounds of possibility that we may still find manuscripts actually penned by Biblical patriarchs, prophets or apostles, or even by Christ Jesus himself.

Thus the vital and ever interesting study of the sources and development of the Book of Books continues unabated, contributing to our understanding of what the original writers recorded in their own languages and to our efforts to render what they had to say clearly and accurately into the speech of today.

Bibliography

Angus, Samuel, *The Environment of Early Christianity.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915.

Baikie, James, *The English Bible and Its Story.* London: Seeley, Service & Co. Ltd., 1928.

——— *The Romance of the Bible.* Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott Co., 1930.

Burrows, Millar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls.* New York: The Viking Press, 1955.

Cross, Frank M., Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies.* Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1958.

Deissmann, G. Adolf, *New Light on the New Testament from Records of the Graeco-Roman Period.* Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907.

Edgar, Andrew, *The Bibles of England.* London: Alexander Gardner, 1889.

English Hexapla, The. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1841.

Finegan, Jack, *Light From the Ancient Past: The Archeological Background of the Hebrew-Christian Religion.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1946.

Gilmore, Albert F., *The Bible: Beacon Light of History.* Chicago: Associated Authors, 1936.

Goodspeed, Edgar J., *The Making of the English New Testament.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1925.

Goodspeed, Edgar J. (Editor). *The Translators to the Reader: Preface to the King James Version 1611.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1935.

HOARE, H. W., *The Evolution of the English Bible,* 4th edition. New York: E. P. Dutton Company, 1901.

KENYON, SIR FREDERIC, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts,* (Revised by A. W. Adams). London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1958.

MILLIGAN, GEORGE, *The English Bible. A Sketch of Its History.* Edinburgh: A. & C. Black, 1896.

——— *Here and There Among the Papyri.* London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1923.

NEWGASS, EDGAR, *The Everlasting Gospel. A Panorama of the English Bible.* London: Charles Skilton Ltd., 1950.

——— *An Outline of Anglo-American Bible History.* B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1958.

PRICE, IRA M. *The Ancestry of Our English Bible,* 9th edition. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1934.

ROBINSON, GEORGE L., *Where Did We Get Our Bible?* New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1928.

SIMMS, P. MARION, *The Bible in America.* New York: Wilson-Erickson Inc., 1936.

SMYTH, J. PATERSON, *The Ancient Documents and the Modern Bible.* New York: James Pott & Company (no date).

——— *How We Got Our Bible,* 16th edition. London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Company Ltd., 1903.

SOUTER, ALEXANDER, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament.* London: Duckworth and Company, 1913.

WEIGLE, LUTHER A. (Editor), *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament.* New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1946.

——— (Editor), *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament.* New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952.

WESTCOTT, BROOKE F., *A General View of the History of the English Bible,* 3rd edition (Revised by William Aldis Wright). London: Macmillan & Co., 1905.

WILSON, EDMUND, *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1955.

Index

Abraham, 37, 63, 141
Aelfric, Abbot, 81
Africa, North, 58f.
Ain Feshkha, 142, 147, 150
Akiba, Rabbi, 24
Aldhelm, 79
Aldred, 81
Alexandria, 17f., 51
Alexandrian Manuscript (Codex Alexandrinus), 45, 50, 53, 73, 107
Alfred the Great, King, 80
Allen, William, 99
American Standard Version, 117-120, 128f., 134, 136
American Translation, The Bible: An, 122
Apocrypha, 46, 60, 136f.
Aquila's Greek Version, 24-26
Aramaic, 29, 31-35, 61f., 64, 137
archaeology, 30, 126, 148
Authorized (King James) Version, 31, 37-39, 48, 52, 60, 71f., 74, 83, 87, 89, 95-99, 103-112, 115-117, 119f., 122, 128-135, 137f.

Babylon, 17
Bede, The Venerable, 80
Bezan Manuscript (Codex Bezae), 45, 52-54, 73
"Bishops' Bible," 98f., 106
Book of Common Prayer, 95, 104
Book of the Law, 21f., 31
"Breeches Bible," (*see* Geneva Version)
British Museum, 46, 51, 62

Caedmon, 79f.
Caesarea, 46f.
Calvin, John, 96f.
Cambridge University, 36, 53, 84, 108f.
Clement of Alexandria, 75
Clement of Rome, 50

codex (codices), 45-54, 73, 107
Constantine, Emperor, 46-48
Coverdale, Miles, 88-90, 93-95, 97, 106, 111
Cranmer, Archbishop, 94
Cromwell, Thomas, 94
Curetonian Syriac Version, 62
Cyprian, 58, 75

Damasus, Bishop of Rome, 59
Dead Sea Scrolls, 15f., 19, 127f., 141-152
Demetrius Phalerus, 18
Diatessaron, 62
Douai Version, (*see* Rheims-Douai Version)

Ebal, Mount, 23
Egypt, 17f., 24, 30, 36, 40, 44, 51f., 62
Eleazar, 18
Ephraem, Codex of, 52f., 63, 73
Erasmus, 84
Essenes, 148f.
Eusebius, 25, 34, 46f.
Ezra, 22

Genevan Version ("Breeches Bible"), 95-99, 106
Gerizim, Mount, 21, 23
Gilbey, Anthony, 97
Goodspeed, Edgar J., 74, 122
Gospels, 32, 34-36, 44f., 53, 61f., 81f., 109
"Great Bible," 93-95, 98, 106
Gutenberg, John, 61

Hampton Court, 103
"Harmony of the Gospels," 35, 62
healing, 20, 31
Henry VIII, King, 94
"Hermit of Hampole," 81
"Higher Criticism," 69

Ignatius, 75
International Council of Religious Education, 129
Isaiah Scroll, "St. Mark's," 145-147, 150
Italy, 17, 57

James I, King, 103ff.
Jericho, 148f.
Jerusalem, 22, 32f., 39, 144f., 149
Jerome, 59f., 131
Jesus, Christ, 20, 37, 39, 54, 61, 142, 144, 146f., 149, 152
Josephus, 21

King James Version, (*see* Authorized Version)
Knox, John, 96-98
Koiné, 31

Lamsa, George M., 33
Lewis, Agnes Smith, 63
Lewis Syriac Version, 63
Lightfoot, Bishop, 36f.
Lindisfarne Gospels, 81
Logia of Matthew, The, 34-36
"Lower," or "Textual, Criticism," 69
Lucar, Cyril, 51
Luther, Martin, 89, 137
LXX (The Septuagint), 17

Manasseh, 21f.
Manual of Discipline, 147
Martin, Gregory, 99
Masorah, 14
Masoretes, 14-16, 71
"Matthew's Bible," 93-95, 106
Messiah, 20, 25
Millenary Petition, 104
Moffatt, James, 39, 72, 74, 121, 130
Munmouth, Humphrey, 85

Nablus (Shechem), 22
Nash Papyrus, 145
Nehemiah, 21, 31
"New Testament Greek," 29-31
Nicæa, Council of, 51
Nicaso, 21
Nicholas de Hereford, 82
Nile, 17f., 43

"Old Latin" Versions, 57-61
Origen, 75
Ormulum, The, 81
Oxford University, 81, 83f., 99, 108f.

Pagninus, 89
Palestine, 16, 20, 32, 46, 57
palimpsest, 52, 63
Papias, 34
papyri, 36-40
papyrus, 30, 36, 39f., 43-45, 126, 145
Parker, Archbishop, 98f.
Pentateuch, 21-24, 86, 151
Peshitta Syriac, 64f.
Ptolemy Philadelphus, 18
punctuation, 13f., 49
Purvey, John, 83f.

"*Q*" (The Logia of Matthew), 35
"Queen of the Versions," 65
Qumran, 147ff.

Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa, 64
Reformation, 96
Revised Standard Version (*or* RSV Bible), 39, 95, 125-138
Revised Version, 38, 83, 115-120, 128
Rheims-Douai Version, 99f.
Rogers, John, 93

Samaritan Version, 21-24
Samaritans, 22f., 25
Sampson, Thomas, 97
Samuel, Archbishop Athanasius Yeshue, 144
Sanballat, 21
Septuagint, 16-21, 24-26, 71, 137
Sinai, Mount, 45, 63, 126
Sinaitic Manuscript (Codex Sinaiticus), 45-51, 53, 63, 73, 75, 107
Sinaitic Syriac Version, 63
Smith, J. M. P., 122
Symmachus' Greek Version, 24-26
Syriac, 24, 61f., 64f., 71, 144

Tatian, 62
Taverner, Richard, 95
Theodotion's Greek Version, 24, 26
Tischendorf, 45
Torah, 21
Trent, Council of, 61
Trever, John C., 145
Tunstall, Cuthbert; Bishop of London, 84
Twentieth Century New Testament, 74, 121
Tyndale, William, 81, 83-90, 93-95, 106, 111, 128

Vatican Manuscript (Codex Vaticanus), 45-50, 53, 73, 75, 107
Vilvorde, castle of, 86
vowel-letters, 14
Vulgate, 57, 59-61, 64, 79, 82, 87, 89, 95, 99, 131, 137

Westminster, 109
Weymouth, Richard F., 74, 121
Whittingham, William, 96f.
Wycliffe, John, 81-83, 95, 106, 111

Zion, Mount, 21
"Zurich Bible," 89
Zwingli, Ulrich, 89

DATE DUE

NEW BOOK
OCT 5 '81
APR 1 8 '7A
FEB

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

BS445 .L53
Our ageless Bible, from early
Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 00113 8447